

The
Faith and Life
of
A Christian

Floyd W. Tomkins, S.T.D.

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Christian

THE FAITH AND LIFE OF A CHRISTIAN

BY

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VOYAGE," ETC.

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DEDICATED TO
The American Sunday-School Union
WHOSE BOOKS AND WORKS
HAVE BEEN
MY DELIGHT FROM MY YOUTH.

EDITOR'S NOTE.

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So much has been said in our time concerning "new theology," "new religion," and the character of the Bible, that many become confused and perplexed in regard to the ground of their religious faith.

It seemed timely, therefore, for a restatement of Christian truth and life, in terms of present-day thought. It is a satisfaction to the American Sunday-School Union to be able to publish this practical work on "The Faith and Life of a Christian," by one distinguished as a minister of Jesus Christ, and competent to voice anew the principles of the kingdom of God laid down by its Founder, and to re-echo the gospel call to personal discipleship in that kingdom.

E. W. R.

PHILADELPHIA, November, 1909.

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INTRODUCTION.

IN these days when much of novelty and contradiction faces us in religious teaching and preaching, a simple compendium of the essentials of Christianity as they have been held from the first is greatly needed. Men are confused in this century by the vagaries of modern thought. They know not what to believe, and they are hungry for certainty, that their religion may comfort and sustain them. They can hardly credit the statement that God has given no specific revelation as to human faith and human life. Like Philip they cry: "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." And all the while the quiet voice of Him Who came and lived amongst us that men might know, is sounding its pathetic answer: "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me?" However the application of the messages of the Christ may vary in their adaptation to the needs of individuals and ages, the one Truth remains the same; for Jesus

Men want
cer-
tainty.

Christ is the same, yesterday, and to-day, and forever. We must bring men back to the old Gospel foundation which can never change, and then they can be fearless in the midst of confusion and in their own strength inspire others with courage.

Perplexing
ques-
tions.

There is also much perplexity to-day as to the relationship between faith and duty. Men question not only the basis of morality, but as well the power of Christianity to make the life pure and the heart brave. They want the comfort of religion to guide them in the daily conflict, and the peace of God to enable them to face calmly and hopefully the future. "Is not your faith something by which we may live?" they cry. "If it is a fact, then we are ready to accept it, but it must prove itself worthy of our acceptance by the power it can give." The story of the church in the world ought to bring an answer; but few read history and fewer understand it. That the only power amongst men to guide and comfort and inspire is Christianity; that the Lord is amongst His people always, and that He knows, and cares, and blesses all who will accept His priceless gifts,—this is not commonly understood. Why this is so, when we have so many churches

and so many preachers and so many Sunday-schools and Bible Classes, cannot be explained in a paragraph, but few will deny the indictment. If in any way we can turn from strong meat to the sincere milk of the Word; if we can go back and read the old story with new delight and cheer, then there is assurance for us. To bring again the very alphabet of Christian truth, that men may learn to spell God's goodness, is the purpose of this little book. With all its imperfections, it claims that what it says is true.

It has not entered into the scope of our pages to notice, still less to answer, modern criticisms of the Bible or of the Gospel. Wise men have done this and done it well. Sufficient is it for our purpose to make positive statements of the "faith once delivered." We do not need in these days to lay again the foundations; it were an impertinence, if not an act of irreverence, so to do. What is needed is a strong reiteration of the message which has brought peace and progress wherever it has been delivered for 1900 years. Even as we turn again and again to some dear Bible verse which we have known from our childhood and find it ever new and inspiring, so

Message to
be re-
peated.

we—though we may be most devout and orthodox—need to “rehearse the articles of our belief,” that, like water to the thirsty, they may refresh and save us. The aged Christian dies with the words upon his lips which he learned in childhood from his mother. So our strength in life’s battle, and our grace for dying, lie in no new revelation, but in the old fount of divine glory which flows and has ever flowed from Christ, the Eternal Son of God.

Need of
Gospel.

No attempt has been made to treat the Gospel theologically in this book. Able men have done this for those who are to teach and to instruct teachers. This is rather a devotional treatment; for the vast majority of Christians it satisfies the need to appeal to the heart rather than to the head, so long as the appeal is based upon exact truth. It is hoped, therefore, that this book may be helpful to many who desire a knowledge of Christian truth, and may serve as a companion in the religious life. Like all human productions it is faulty; but being written with sincere prayer for guidance it is sent forth with a reliance upon the Holy Spirit, that He may both pardon its imperfections and use

it for the advancement of God's glory and the building up of His children. With the benediction of God even the simplest effort may accomplish great good. May such a benediction go with these pages!

FLOYD W. TOMKINS.

PHILADELPHIA, 1909.

Church of the Holy Trinity.

THE FAITH AND LIFE OF A CHRISTIAN.

CHAPTER I.

CHRIST THE CENTRE.

UNTIL Christ came to earth there was no clear knowledge as to life's origin or meaning or end. The patriarchs believed in God, but He was only a God superior to the gods of the heathen nations about them. God revealed Himself to the Jews through Moses and the Prophets, but still He was veiled in His being and in His nature. By inspiration the great writers made the veil thin and gave utterance to glorious truths, but we understand their words better than even the men who uttered them because Christ has come and told us their meaning. We hardly realize, until we stop to think of it, how the Old Testament is full of comfort and assurance to

us because the Master has made it so. In a lesser way the words of some great Roman and Greek writers, though uninspired, help us because we read them as they are lighted up by the eternal and blessed glow of the Light of the World. Marcus Aurelius and Socrates, about whom men are talking much to-day, bring us good messages because we read into them the very atmosphere of Christianity. Of everything, life's beginning, life's endurance, life's pleasure or pain, and life's end, Jesus Christ is the interpretation.

Jesus the
inter-
preter of
life.

We need to fix our minds upon this great event of the world's history. Christianity is not *a* religion; it is not a philosophy, or a moral code, or a theory to account for man's progress. It is a great, glorious fact. God came to earth in the Person of Jesus Christ. He was here amongst men and made clear that which had never been clear before; and in the light of that life, in the power of Christ's death and resurrection and ascension, the world has been moving ever since. Men, Jews and heathen alike, were confused and weary before Christ came. It was a strange career they were running, and they could see no purpose or promise in it at all. The story the his-

torians tell us of the world's condition, moral, intellectual and religious, before the hour came when the angels began their carol on Bethlehem's hills—that grand processional in the worship which has never ceased—is a startling one. Everything was riotous in life and brain and nation. Apparently men had tried in every way to reach happiness, and in every way had failed. There was nothing left. Life was simply “a muddle,” and no one could enlighten himself or his fellows regarding it. The clouds hung heavily; love's song had died away, for it had been sung as an expression of hunger rather than as an assurance; good and evil were confused, and there was no plan by which they could be distinguished; work was a mockery; government a confused failure; home a name only; thought a demon driving men to despair. What was there to anticipate? What power had memory, since there was no radiance by which the past could be made clear? Men were all either Stoics or Epicureans, practically; the former, few in number, crying: “We know nothing and can know nothing, but let us endure it and die like men;” the latter shouting: “We know nothing and can know nothing;

let us yield to-day to the delights of passion, for to-morrow we die.”

Light of
the
world.

And then came this glorious daybreak. The Light of the World appeared. He did not burn the world of men by a majesty they could not endure. He did not drive them as enemies until they submitted to a rule of righteousness and faith. Oh, the very marvel of the manner of that coming proves its divine blessedness and power! For Jesus just shone as a light in a darkened world, and men kindled their little tapers at the flame of His holiness, and the glow began to spread, just as the glow of the rising sun spreads from mountain-top to sea, and from tree to flower, gradually, surely, comfortingly. A hundred years, and the world was practically revolutionized, “turned . . . upside down” as the Thessalonians said (Acts 17:6). The seed was sown. The light was kindled. Jesus was worshipped. Christianity had begun its work. Christ henceforth was to stand as the Centre of the world.

It must not be thought to detract from this glory that the world is still so far from a perfect condition. Light travels speedily, and yet the light of some star

which began speeding on its way, astronomers tell us, six thousand years ago, has only just reached us. So the Almighty works in nature; the seed, the blade, the full corn in the ear. To us it seems a slow progress which humanity is making. And yet when we look at the earth's history in a large way, the progress has really been startling. The ground had to be prepared over a large portion of the world before any planting could be done. The early Christians did not even know what the earth was; they could only go to adjacent places and preach. Through the "dark ages" as we call them, from the 5th to the 12th centuries, the preparation was going on. And in these latter days the truth is speeding so rapidly that to trace its advance almost causes us to grow dizzy. Every nation and every island of the sea is now ready for the message of Christ, and Christian men are straining every nerve to preach it. We are living in a missionary era such as the world has never known.

As Christ is the Centre of the world's life, so He is the Centre of the individual life. We have grown so familiar with our blessings that we scarcely realize their glory. The man looks at his years, and

Christ the
Centre.

they no longer, as did the years of the ancients who knew not the Lord, pass as a vapor. He knows—even if he is not really a personal follower of Christ—that there is a God Who made him, a God to meet him when he dies, and a work to be done while he lives. From God, for God, to God—so the interpretation of existence runs, and the man knows it, feels it, acknowledges it by every act of every day. In the light which Christ kindled every man is basking; everything about him, every thought and emotion within him, bears witness to Christ. The nation in which he peaceably lives and pursues his business; the home in whose sacred confines he finds his rest; the schools which care for his children; the physicians who heal his sickness; the food he eats, the books he reads, the friendships he forms—about them all shines this blessed Christian atmosphere which has become so natural a thing that he hardly thinks of it any more than he thinks of the air he breathes or the pulsations of his heart which keep him alive. Take away from any man his conscious or unconscious faith in Christ—and I do not except even those who pretend to deny the Christ—and he

is absolutely lost, so strongly has the Master established Himself as the Centre about Whom all human existence revolves. This needs no proof; it is self-evident. A life from which the Christ has gone with all the direct and indirect influence of His love, His patience, His truth, His promises, His forgiveness, His Heaven! Why, it is impossible to conceive of it until you reduce man to the level of the unintelligent and unemotional beast! Not only is Christianity as a fact, a power in the world and in his companion's life, something for which the man must account and with which he must deal, but he himself is influenced by the personal Christ; daily His teachings mold or seek to mold his life; hourly His words come to his lips, and constantly his judgments are fashioned by the magnetic and divine example of the Master Who made love and sacrifice the principles of living.

Let us go a little more into particulars, and see how Christ is the Centre of the world's life and of the personal life of each man. And first, we note the way in which right and wrong are referred to Him for judgment. Christianity, not as preached by men, but as taught by the Master, is the

Of right
and
wrong.

centre of decision to which are brought alike abstract questions and particular issues. We can read England's Magna Charta and the Declaration of Independence and know that they proceeded from no Christless governments. Constitutions of nations and special court decisions, arbitration settlements and legal opinions are so based, not upon the power of the stronger over the weaker but upon the foundations of mercy and love and sacrifice, that an easy analysis can bring them all to balance with the Lord's direct teachings. And with the individual where a keener personal equation enters, under all questions of duty and fairness and even of mercy, arises inevitably the query: "Is this what God wishes?" Christ revealed sin as not merely a breaking of law but as a wounding of the love and desire of our Best Friend. Not consciously always or often do we measure right or wrong by an exact comparison with Christ's life or an absolute adherence to His words; but so nearly has He entered into our living with His loving guardianship that we instinctively look to Him for approval, and can instantly tell whether we have it or not. In other words right and wrong are no

longer measured by power or by wrath or even by the disguised vengeance which we poor humans call "punishment," but by the will of God. Philosophy and the psychology of legal ethics are forgotten; might which used to make right is discredited; abstract decisions disregarding circumstances are not recognized. A higher law has entered which no statute can adequately frame nor any words shape in perfection; it is the law of the divine will revealed to us by Him Who came to earth nineteen hundred years ago. "What wilt thou have me to do?" That cry of St. Paul, stricken on his way to Damascus, has become the guide to action, and has made Him to Whom it was addressed the one Arbiter in the affairs of men.

Again, we mark Christ as the Centre in our human relationships. How can we explain the rapid spread of the brotherhood idea, which is drawing nations together and entering with daring into the economics of life so that no man can carry on his business regardless of the interests of producer and consumer? Is it born out of an irreligious philosophy? Traces of it can be found in the best thought of

Of human
relation-
ship.

Greece and Rome, but it received no credence. Is it the result of association? Nations dwelt side by side for long and knew no brotherhood in either theory or practice. We find the germ in the early Church, a seed planted by the Master and slowly but surely developing until to-day slavery is unknown and men are judged by character rather than by the color of their skin or by their bank account. If slow in coming to recognition and not yet complete in its influence, we can have no hesitation, if we think and read at all, in saying that this brotherhood idea is in the air to-day and in the air with such commanding power that nations and men are looking up and reconstructing their old methods to meet its imperious edicts. Men are talking a great deal to-day about socialism. Well, there are many kinds of socialism, some of them wild, some foolish, some impossible; but true socialism is simply brotherhood, and our Christ in that regard has been termed, and rightly, the first Socialist because He taught the principles of man's brotherhood as deduced from the fact of God's fatherhood. Individualism, which led every man to do that which was right in his own eyes, is as dead

to-day as the old philosophers who first gave it expression. It will never know a resurrection. And the reason why a man should love his brother is found in no evolution of a human idea but in the direct power of that dear faith which the Lord Jesus gave, and which, after all these years, is coming to the throne.

Yet once more, Christ is the Centre as regards the hope of the future. Men have always had unconquerable hope. They could not believe that death was the end of all. But alas! how little this hope availed until Christ came and brought life and immortality to light! Shall we meet again? Shall we live again? And eye sought eye in the burning desire that some assurance might be given, but no assurance came. It was all a big interrogation point with the balance in favor of final extinction. Those were sad years, as sad as is now the life of one who, in the midst of Christian sunshine still rests in the shadow of despair. But the clouds have gone! Death is swallowed up in victory! The Master of Life not only rose from the dead but He declared concerning the future such glorious things that human life has been ringing with them ever since. No wonder the world's ad-

Hope of
the fu-
ture.

vance began as Christ was preached! Enlarge man's atmosphere, proclaim his immortality, and nothing is impossible for him. If I know I am going to live forever then the wings of my flight are unclipped and my feet and hands unpalsied, and I am free and strong.

Results of
hope.

It would take volumes to tell all that has come to us as a result of this hope which is a certainty through Christ. All the marvels of discovery and invention, all the fearlessness of endeavor and struggle, all the emancipations from gloom and selfishness, the deepening of friendships, the holiness of relationships, the assurance of final understanding where things here are perplexing, the mutual binding of hearts and hands in high deeds of mercy and goodness—these are only suggestions of what it means to say that Christ is the Centre of the world's hope. No longer have we any horizon to shut us in. As I look from my window and see the ocean and sky meeting, yet know, notwithstanding, of the lands beyond where the earth's hills still leap and flowers make fragrant the laughter of my brothers, so I look to the sky and it is no longer brass, for I can see through it and hear the songs of the

redeemed, and know that I have a place beyond when my place here shall know me no more. You ask me how I know, and I point you to Christ, and then to the world's life, and then to human progress; and then I bid you listen and hear the glad cry going up from human lips all over the round world—a cry of victory, a *Te Deum* of magnificent praise in which God's works on earth and the angels of Heaven join. Christ is the Centre of it all.

O, Galilean, Thou hast conquered! Though still poor weakness holds us, and we are sin-stained as men who are travelling, yet Thou art our glory, for Thou art the Centre of all things and of all living. Let my little life revolve about Thine that it may shine in Thy light. Let my mind fly to Thee, that it may think Thy thoughts. Let my heart be touched by Thy love that I may do Thy will. Yea, dear Christ, let me see Thee, face to face, in all pure-heartedness, that I may know myself to be held in Thine arms, and that I am a part of Thy plan and a child of Thy mercy. Amen.

CHAPTER II.

MAN, GOD'S CHILD THROUGH CHRIST.

WE have seen that Christ is the Centre of all life. He is the Power about Whom all move, and we gain our significance from Him as the earth gains her light and her seasons by revolving around the sun. Without Him we cannot live. Only as we live in and through Him can we accomplish anything.

God's
child.

Let us see now what Christianity has to say about our relationship to God through Jesus Christ. We need to understand this in order to know how we can approach God. If He is a great Being far removed from us, a mighty Force unknowable and unknown, a Mystery concerning Whom one can only conjecture; or if He be hidden entirely from us so that, as some of our modern philosophers declare, we can only say He is absolutely incomprehensible and the idea of Him is inconceivable, then we are virtually fatherless; we are ignor-

ant of our beginning, we know not whence we came. But if God has been revealed to us so that we can both know and love Him, so that we can talk to Him and hear Him speak to us, then we have the delight of children and can realize our importance as children of God. Now Christianity teaches us that God has been revealed to us through Christ. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," said our Lord (St. John 14:9). And Jesus told us just what our relationship is to the great Creator of heaven and earth; we are the "children of God." Children of God! That is a startling and wonderful truth! We love our parents, and he is a poor child who has no pride in being his father's son, his mother's offspring. Our first conception as infants is of a mother. Our first words are formed by our conscious relationship to her. There is a holiness in the cry we hear from children's lips: "Mamma! Papa!" Yet there is a truth holier and grander. The "Lord of all being, throned afar," as Oliver Wendell Holmes calls Him, is my Father. He Who made and rules and controls and holds the destiny of all things in His hands, made me, is the origin of my being. Human though I am,

I am divine by creation. Weak though I am, I have the power of the Infinite behind me. To remember that is to know self-reverence.

God as
power.

At first God was only known to men as a mighty hidden power. He talked, indeed, to Adam and to Noah, but they never seemed to realize their relationship to Him, either because of their imperfect development or because God veiled Himself under the guise of an angel. They offered sacrifices to Him on altars as the heathen do to-day. They cried to Him in their fear as the wicked do to-day. But they did not know Him. At last through 'Abraham God let men know that He was their Creator, and that brought Him nearer, though it is doubtful whether the patriarchs understood the meaning of Fatherhood. To Moses God revealed Himself as a Being Who must be obeyed, a Being of Power Who could work miracles, and destroy and build up. And to the prophets He came nearer still and gave promise that at some future time He would come amongst His people. But that is all we can get out of the Old Testament. Men crying "Oh, that I knew where I might find him," and dying without the sight or

the knowledge. In the New Testament the sun rises and darkness flees away. God, Who made man, came to earth in Jesus Christ. And Christ took us who were God's children by creation, but wandering far away in ignorance and sin, and made us God's children by adoption, made us heirs of His Kingdom, the children of His everlasting love and care. Now all who will, all who accept Christ's leadership, can see in three directions the mercy of God: His creation behind them, for they came from God; His recreation in their lives, for through Christ they are made new in heart and spirit; His final exaltation, for at last they shall see Him as He is, see Him face to face, and know Him even as He now knows them.

Let us pause here for a moment to meditate on this great truth which can be told in so few words. How marvellous it is! Here am I, with a part of my life behind me,—and it is not a very creditable part; I have not much to be proud of in the years I have lived; no man has. In the present I feel my weakness, beset as I am by temptations and fears and trials, and the way at best is very lonesome. The future, many years or few I know not, is

God's
mercy.

all uncertain. At last death, and the world of new men forgets me! What a miserable lot! Is it worth while? But look towards the East! See the faint light driving the shadows before it! Mark the glowing radiance as hill and valley, sea and sky, leaf and flower are tipped with glorious color. Then look, the sun brings his golden light, the brilliancy of his power asserts itself, the night is gone, day is here. So the Sun of righteousness came long ago to a weary, dispirited race. At first the light was dim and men could only hope. Then the coloring came to life and there was a transfiguration. And finally the full glory of Christ appeared and man was given his freedom. "Let there be light," cried again He Who was the Light of the World, and then the human learned in the day of Christianity that which has given him the wings of immortality. I look behind me now, and at the horizon is God. I look before me, and on the banks of the River I see God waiting for me. I look around me, and lo, each task and each trial carries my name, inscribed thereon by the finger of God; they are mine, given to me by Him. From God, to God, for God—that is my life. And the sins, the fail-

ures, the doubts can no more bar my way to my King than the fly which stings his cheek can bar the way to the soldier who is rushing to the hill where the banner of victory is waving.

How Christ did this for us, how He made us God's reclaimed children, we will tell later. Let us now see what the actual power of Christ's redemption means to us in our daily living. And first of all, it means a clear knowledge of our origin and our end. It seems strange if we can tell whence things about us came and yet be ignorant whence we ourselves came. This watch was made by a watchmaker; it did not make itself. This book was written by a man; he thought the truths it contains, and the printer took his words and pressed them upon paper, and other men can read them. This flower grew from a seed or a bulb planted in the ground. But whence came I? Did any man make me? Is there any ground whence I sprang, I, with my thoughts and longings and hopes and loves? Who made me? The watchmaker made the watch, but who made the watchmaker and gave him his skill? The man wrote the book, but who made the author and whence came his thoughts? To be

Redemp-
tive
power.

unable to answer that question is to be wrapt in the deepest gloom. If I cannot assert my origin I am a waif indeed. But here comes my declaration leaping out of my lips, my eyes, my heart: "God made me; He is my Father; He was once on earth and men saw Him and He told them the truth; He made us worthy of our high birth and took us by the hand, all cleansed and gloriously clothed, and brought us to God. I know Who made me!" What a splendid cry of victorious knowledge that is as it rings through the dull earth-ways and rises in the air with its song! It is the Christian's cry. He knows. His Christ has told him.

Sonship
and
service.

Again, this knowledge of our sonship and of the Fatherhood of God inspires to noble service. Everything we do becomes intelligible. We are no longer "hewing out roads to a wall." Our "long, laborious quest" is not a blind effort to sustain life and escape pain. As the interest of the Prince is the care of the King's realm, so the son of God knows he has God's work to do, and all things, little and great, insignificant or apparently of great importance, are a part of the service He calls upon him to render. In other words life

becomes full of meaning and full of power. Every task, every opportunity, every word, every relationship is exalted, for it is a part of the Almighty's plan which He has placed His children here on earth to execute. "Christ set men to work," cried a man once after reading the Gospel through. Yes, He set men to work, or rather He threw a new meaning and power into the work men were already doing. We are working now as God's redeemed sons.

It is only as this new light shines upon us that we can really live. Existence is a poor thing for human beings. Stones exist, and through God's will and man's service they are forced into use. But man *lives*. He is a factor. He takes things by the power of his Maker and fashions them. That is the great secret which unlocks history and the advance of humanity since Christ came, and without it all the past is but confusion even as all the future must be mystery. It makes clear the struggles and the pains. If man was made God's son through the sufferings of Christ, then man can hardly hope to do God's work without pain. And so pain becomes not only a glory as it proves that we are doing our Creator's work, but a bond of union

Light and
life.

between the Lord and ourselves. It gives, too, a system to the world's work. We are seeking a transformation; we are recreating, even as Christ recreated. All efforts, all prayers, all exhortation, every stand taken for the right are lifted up into the great world-wide, age-long plan of the Almighty and made a part of the glory which is sure to come in God's good time.

Father and
child.

But best of all this sonship brings us into a dear personal relationship to our Father. We can talk to Him, and listen to Him when He speaks to us, and hold communion with Him, even as a wise son with an earthly father and a loving earthly father with a loyal son. "How good it is to see father and son so companionable," said a woman as she saw a man and his son associate familiarly together! It is indeed a pleasant and all too rare sight. But the best part of it is the illustration it gives of the way we can be one with our heavenly Father in all we are, in all we do, in the reading of His Word, and in the hearing of His messages in nature and in our personal experiences. No blindness can there be for us if we know our sonship; we can read truths written as plainly in sky and hill and sea and flower as the law

was written on the tablets of stone on Sinai. No dread of sin can make us hide ourselves, for Christ has taken sin away. No trouble or grief can make us think our God has forgotten us, for we know how these trials are the studies to develop character and to give wisdom. Oh, this holy fellowship with the Infinite which makes life sublime, how it lifts us to new realms, gives us new pleasures, opens new paths and sings us new songs! "I am Thine—Thou art Mine"—so the heavenly duetto rises as spirit meets with spirit, and we know that which was and is hidden from sages and philosophers, from the wise and prudent, and is now revealed unto babes.

All these privileges are ours if we accept the redeeming love of Christ and confess Him as our Saviour. It is no complicated arrangement, nor does it demand either credulity or fanaticism. It is a simple fact in the world's history, as clear and strong and well authenticated as the discovery of America or the Copernican system concerning the ruling of the heavenly bodies. "The Son of God was made Son of man, that sons of men might become sons of God." With the grasping of the life and death and resurrection and ascen-

Our
Saviour.

sion of Jesus of Nazareth came the new life. Rome was turned from heathenism to Christianity, and men were made brave to lay down their lives that it might be accomplished. The new truth spread through continents and through the islands of the sea, and everywhere there came new methods of living and new progress. Love took the place of hate. Peace spread her banner and cruel wars began to be discredited. Study of God's earth and of God's laws claimed men's best endeavors. To help men rather than to destroy them became the rule. Churches were built that those who were God's adopted sons might meet together and worship and learn how the Master would have them live. Education became the watchword of civilization. The terror of death subsided, and flowers were strewn upon the tombs to express the faith of the mourners in a continued life and a larger sphere of progress. Moral standards were elevated, and men learned the difference between right and wrong, between truth and a lie, between justice and injustice. Not yet, indeed, has the fulness come. Still there are failures and still there are the blind who will not see. But in spite of all the great flood of light is

spreading, a flood which no man, no devil, can hinder or delay. The world is soon to be Christ's. "Oh, Galilean, Thou hast conquered!"

The practical question is whether we have accepted our privilege, whether we have entered the new life, whether through Christ we are openly by confession the sons of God, whether the blessed freedom of Christianity is ours. To help men answer this question, to call them to this honor, to explain to them how it may be theirs, is the part of the Church with all her accessories. The Bible proclaims it. The ministers of the gospel urge it. The Church sends her missionaries everywhere, Bible in hand, to declare it. She opens her doors and compels men to come in. She cries out against the wrongs which bar the way. She claims the sovereignty of Christ over all the affairs of men.

New life
in
Christ.

And in the silent hours when the soul is alone, when the earth-life is shut out, when the things of our experience face us with exaggerated importance, when friendships plead for service, and the future calls us with relentless demand—then the question of questions speaks, and the Father looks down upon us and asks us if we accept the

glory He offers, and the Christ asks if we are willing to take His free gift. "Am I a son of God?"—so runs the question. At first there is confusion—"I cannot understand." Then there is fear: "God is so great and I but an atom in the universe, here to-day, gone forever to-morrow!" Again comes the accusing voice: "I am full of sin; how dare I look up and call the Holy and the Almighty my Father, or call my sin-stained self His son?" And what then? Then comes the vision of a life, of a Person with arms outstretched and calling "Come!" Then comes the Cross with the suffering Body but the triumphant Being of that Person fixed thereon, and crying "It is finished!" Then comes the divine word: "Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." And at the sight and the sound reason ceases her attempt to comprehend love, fear flies as the cloud before the sun, sin is forgotten as the black earth is hidden by the white snow, and the heart cries out: "My Father, oh, my Father!" It is the work of Christ Who has brought back the wanderer to the Father's house, and there is a sound of rejoicing before the White Throne.

O, my Christ, before Thee I bow, not in fear but in full gratitude that Thou hast brought to me the message of the Father's love and by Thy blood hast made me the son of God! Let me rejoice in it and never through all the days forget it. If trials come let them bring me to my Father's feet. If I am weak then let me find strength from my Father's hand. If I fall into a despoise of myself because of my unworthiness then let me remember what Thou hast made me, and rise in pride because of my high heritage. And if now I am indeed a son of God, let me look forward to that day when Thou shalt appear and I shall be like Thee because seeing Thee face to face. Amen.

CHAPTER III.

CHRIST'S RELATIONSHIP TO MAN.

CHRIST has made us the sons of God by becoming Himself the Son of Man, and dying, and rising victorious over death, and opening the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers. What relationship then does He bear to us? How are we to think of Him; how shall we regard Him; how shall our lives be affected by Him? These are grave questions and demand a clear and positive answer. Christianity has such an answer which she gathers from the words of the Master Himself. Let us see what it is.

What of
Christ?

We may well stop here to say that the consideration of this matter is fundamental. "What think ye of Christ?" is the question which must be answered by every man. "What did ye think of Christ?" will be the question to be answered at the Day of Judgment. If we remember what a change Christianity has

made and is still making and will ever continue to make in the world; if we recall how, historically, Christ is the centre of the world's history, with all before Him and all since He came pointing towards Him as the glorious Polar Star of truth and power—for it is significant that our human history is always dated B. C. or A. D.—“before Christ” or “in the year of our Lord”—then there can be no evasion with any thinking man of this great question. Nor will it do to answer it falsely. We may say Christ was but a man, greater than many, greater than all, but by so saying we no more solve the riddle of Christianity's power than we answer the question. If He was only a man then His words were false and so He could not have been a great man, for no man is false concerning himself. If He was only a man then His miracles were not real, and the whole fabric of the New Testament falls in fragments at our feet. If He was only a man then is He no more to us of power, of love, of worship, of hope, than any good man who lives or has ever lived, and the world's passion of faith by which myriads have endured and lived and suffered and died is the most

awful mockery conceivable. There is only one answer to this question, and that is the answer which Peter gave and upon which Christ declared He would build His church; and grandly has He fulfilled His declaration: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." It is out of place here to go into a discussion of the nature of Christ. The object of these pages is to declare plainly, simply but categorically, the faith of a Christian. But we may mention two great books for those to read who are undecided and uncertain in their faith. One is Canon Liddon on "The Divinity of Christ," and the other "The Jesus of the Evangelists" by Canon Row. There are countless other books. The real knowledge of the Christ nature must come, however, from the Holy Ghost. Jesus said to Peter when he made his glorious declaration: "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." If all who doubt would but go in frank desire and hunger and kneel in private before God and ask for a knowledge of the truth, the truth would come.

There can be no Christianity where

Christ is not acknowledged and worshipped as God. There can be no adherence to the Gospels, or to the Epistles of the New Testament, unless He is so acknowledged. The illogical character of heresy has not been sufficiently recognized amongst us. With Christ—if He is taken away—must go the Bible, morality, friendship, hope, struggle, courage, eternity. With Him these are the essentials of a Christian life.

Without
Christ—
what?

Let us come back now to our first question and ask what relationship Christ bears to man. First, He is the Saviour. His name, given when His future birth was announced to Joseph, was “Jesus,” meaning “Saviour” or “Jehovah saves,” “for he shall save his people from their sins.” Christ saves us from our sins as the angel of God declared He would. This salvation is through His blood which He shed for us on the Cross. He died that we might live. This salvation has three parts:

Christ a
Saviour.

1. We are saved from our sinful condition. We were wanderers, and Christ sought us and brought us back to the Father's house. We have the stain of sin upon us, and Christ saves us by the new birth. Through Him we can look up and rejoice because we are made free. We need

Three
parts of
salva-
tion.

not remember the past. He bore on the Cross the sins of the whole world, so we are free from them.

2. Christ saves us from the consequences of sin. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." So that, though still weak and yielding to sin, we need not be afraid of the just wrath of God against sin, not against the sinner, for "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." Oh, the blessedness of that! Not a day, not an hour passes but that through thought, word, or deed, through omission or commission, we sin and are stained; and then a prayer from the heart, "Forgive," and we are white as snow! We may go to our sleep each night as pure as little children. In our remorse for sin, and even in our witnessing the temporary consequences of our sin, for God allows often the error to work sorrow that we may be led to greater watchfulness, we need never fear final ruin. Even Satan cannot claim us, weak though we are, when we are safe in the arms of Him Who died for us.

3. And then He saves us from sin-

ning:—not at once, but little by little as His grace grows in us and His love brings us near to Himself. We grow to be better men through His salvation. We love good things more and we hate bad things more, and our ideals are more exalted as we go on in the Christian life. This is the work of the grace or favor or love of God in our hearts. And it reveals to us the real character of sin.

What is sin? A violation of God's law? A breaking into the harmony of the universe? A transgression of metes and bounds which righteousness has laid down? Doubtless, but the definition is faulty. Sin is that which hurts God because He loves us so. A man once told me he learned the definition of wrong from a tear on his mother's cheek. He had hurt his mother's love. Ah, that brings us face to face with a great truth before which law and rule and command are almost insignificant. To hurt my friend—that is sin. And as I love God more and more with the love which Christ gives me I hate sin more and more because I cannot bear to grieve my Best Friend. All this is the salvation which Christ brings. Sin.

Inter-
cessor.

He is also my Intercessor. We are told that He sits at God's right hand ever living to make intercession for us. We must not think that this implies God's anger with us or His unwillingness to receive us. It means far more, namely, that we cannot appear in the presence of the Holy God as we are. We must be prepared. A sinful man in heaven would find it worse than hell. Any place for which we are not fitted is a place of torment. If I found myself alone on an engine running sixty miles an hour with a hundred passengers in the cars behind me, and I knew nothing about the management of the engine, how to stop it, or to regulate it, what would be my feelings? The beauty of the story of the wedding garment lies in the kindness of the host in making his guests feel at home. When then we approach God and the brilliancy of His light floods about us and we are justly afraid and cry as did Isaiah: "Woe is me! for I am undone," the hand of the dear Christ is stretched out, He cleanses us and makes us fit to enter in, He confesses us because we have confessed Him: "This is My child, Father, and Thine because Mine. I died for him and he loves Me;" and oh,

the light on the King's face as He welcomes us, first for His dear Son's sake, and then for our own sake because He loves us so and longs for our happiness! It is this intercession which makes our lives blessed because we live or try to live in the light of the King's countenance. It is this which gives assurance to our prayers as we ask in Jesus' name and for His sake. It is this which brings the dear Lord near to us as our Guardian, and tells us of His leading us by the hand all through the earth-way with its dangers and darkness, until He causes us to "enter in." Oh, blessed intercession, oh, precious Christ!

Jesus is an Example. He died, but He **Example.** also lived for thirty-three years a blameless life. Absolutely human, so that He was tempted in all points like as we are; with all our longings and desires and emotions; with trials pressing Him and thorns piercing His feet as they do ours; dealing with all kinds of men, meeting all kinds of experiences, He lived the only faultless life the world has ever known. "What did Jesus do" thus becomes the guide for us all, and that in the most minute particulars. His manner of living, simple, unselfish; His manner of speech, direct and

kind; His mercy, His pity, His sympathy, His courage, His patience—there they all lie before us on the pages of that inspired history, and we look upon them and a new strength enters into us. The trouble with all earthly examples is their imperfection, and when we try to imitate them we are sure to imitate faults as well as excellencies. The ideal we set before us has much to do with our advance or retrogression. And here we have an Ideal which was once and is now real. We look at Him, and there is no hesitancy. In the strength of His goodness we find our goodness growing strong. Of course the special blessedness of it all lies in the fact that Christ not only shows us how we ought to live, but grants the power to attain. It is no dead excellence of marble, without feeling, for He was made perfect through struggle. He had His battles as we must have ours. But He is also the living Son of God, and while we look and long He reaches out His hand and brings us near to Himself.

Brother.

Christ is our Brother. It is a dear title. For though brothers are often most faulty amongst men yet the ideal brotherhood is a foundation not only for the Christian

fraternity wherein we are all members of one family, but as well for many associations of men allied together for a common purpose. It implies fellowship. It implies common experience. It implies a common fatherhood and a common opportunity. Brotherhood binds men together as comrades. It tells of a fellowship in defeating foes and in gaining victories. It makes the desolate path easy with the grace of companionship, and it lightens the burden which rests more easily on the shoulders of two. The Lord brings us into union with Himself. We have the same task, even the redemption of the world. We have the same tie binding us to humanity, for as He was human, though also divine, so we are made of God "of one blood for to dwell on all the face of the earth." In helping others we are helping Him: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Ah, it is this brotherhood of the Master which keeps our faith from becoming an institution or a cult. Christianity gains its sacredness and its power because it means brotherhood with the Lord Who called us to join Him in the work of His eternal and loving

Kingdom. You cannot think of Christianity without Christ, not only because He is the centre of it all and the power of its life, but because He is Himself in it, through it, pervading it, one with all who accept it. "Lo, I am with you always."

Friend.

We almost hesitate when we try to say that Christ is our Friend! For the word is a holy word, almost the holiest in our speech. To say of another, "he is my friend," is to acknowledge him as having entered into the holy of holies of our being. It is often carelessly and lightly used, this name "friend"—more shame to us! We speak of a host of folk as "our friends" when perchance none, or at best but one, can really claim the benediction of the title. "Ye are my friends," said Jesus. "Ye are not servants, not knowing what the Master is doing. Ye are more than companions following in the way and sharing the duties but shut out from the sanctuary of thought and the harmony of the soul. Ye are closer than brothers, for if ye really love Me ye are at once like brother and sister and mother. Ye are friends. I keep nothing back. I cover nothing of My desires or of My experiences. I enter into the depths of your de-

sires and experiences also, for My friendship is very strong. I have called you friends!" It will be recalled how He proved this friendship when He took three of His disciples to the Mount of Transfiguration, and three again to witness His first resurrection miracle, and again the same three when He agonized in the Garden. Ah, He is never shut out from the greatest moments of our lives, nor does He shut us out from the holy things of His desire. From Him no secrets are hid, and He never betrays our confidence. Unto Him all our hearts are open, and He knows us better than we know ourselves. To be able, humbly, reverently, to call Christ our Friend—our Best Friend, is to enter into the riches of our faith indeed. And we need never be afraid. A true friend is never critical. A true friend never turns away no matter how unworthy we know ourselves to be of his friendship. A true friend is like a rock; he defends us in his loyalty, he stands by us in our necessity, he takes us as we are, for he looks not at the outward appearance but at the heart. Upon such an one we can absolutely rely. He never fails. And such, in our lonely, troubled, enemy-beset, oft-de-

ceived lives is Jesus Christ. A Friend that sticketh closer than a brother. A Friend never growing cold, never forgetting, never misjudging, never, oh, never, turning away!

Our life.

Finally, Christ is our Life. He gives us life at the first. He imparts new and fuller life as we go on our way and our necessity deepens. He makes the common life, physical, mental, spiritual, ever richer and more real. And He endows us with that which we recognize, as He gives it, as worth more than all else—everlasting life; a life which has no ending, a life which is to increase in power all through the ages of eternity, a life in which the dearest and best are to share, a life into which shall finally enter a great fulfilment of all that is looked for, longed for, hungered for here. He is our life. In Him we know we shall find at last all our restless natures craved and cried for. From Him flows, even now, through the channels of grace which He has provided, a new force which he feels who kneels in prayer, or reads the Bible, or bows in adoration before the Almighty. So that we grow to say that “we live in Him,” because He gives of all that is best and most lasting in our years—

peace, forgiveness, love, hope, blessing, and a foretaste of the felicity which is to be "after this fever is passed."

O, Thou Christ, my all in all, I thank Thee that Thou hast come to make me highly favored and to set me amongst princes. My Saviour, Thou dost pardon. My Intercessor, Thou dost adopt. My Example, Thou dost lead. My Brother, Thou dost come near. My Friend, Thou dost know. My Life, Thou dost exalt. Hold me to Thyself, O Friend, and let me never fall away. Amen.

CHAPTER IV.

MAN'S RELATIONSHIP TO CHRIST.

WE come now to that which is commonly called the life of the Christian man. Christ being the Centre of all things, and having made us God's children, and having become all things to us in His great and gracious love and mercy, how are we called upon to live? What are we to Him when He is so much to us? It will be seen at once that here we enter upon a great truth, namely, that the Christian life of a man is a relationship to a Person. It is not obedience to law, it is not the observance of a ritual of worship, it is not a vague holding to high principles, nor yet an ardent adherence to lofty hopes. It has little or no philosophy. It is no following of a system of belief. It is not even the holding to a creed, if back of that creed to vivify it there stands no being about whom the creed is formed and to whom the creed is fastened. This is what makes the Chris-

Person of
Christ.

tian faith absolutely different from any man-made religion. You may build up a philosophy to which men may cling as to a raft in the midst of the ocean-billows of life; it has been done, and alas, for the slowness of men to realize their blessings, it is being done almost daily. It is easy, too, to establish laws of moral excellence and count adherence to them a faith. But to have a Being Who was once on this earth, and Who came from God, and Who created a family of those who believed in Him—to have Him as the centre, and loyalty to Him as the faith, the inspiration to right doing, and the power to guide—that has had only one instance in the world's history, and that is Christianity. Loyalty to Christ is the Christian's watchword, and the Christian's faith, and the Christian's law of life. Our relationship to Christ is that of loyalty, even as His relationship to us is that of love.

Loyalty demands many things. First **Trust.** of all it demands a splendid trust which nothing can destroy. To trust our Master is to know that He loves us with an un-failing love, to know that His word is truth, to be patient when we cannot understand Him, to be silent and wait when we

cannot see or hear Him, to stand up for Him when He is opposed or derided or scorned, to follow Him whithersoever He leads, even though it be through hard places and dark ways. Trust is a glorious thing in this world even amongst ourselves. To trust a man is to show him the finest compliment; and poor indeed is he who does not respond to such confidence. "I trust you," friend says to friend, and the words create a bond of union which cannot easily be broken. To lose all trust in man is not only to be a miserable pessimist in theory, but to let go the force which alone makes living endurable. So with our loyalty to Christ. Beyond a faith which can declare why; beyond a knowledge which can make clear the truth; even beyond the worship which declares the soul's affection, there must lie simple, absolute, all-compelling trust if we would really be Christians. Trust can be helped by many means of God's providing. The gracious promises, the wonderful accounts given us in the Gospels, the control of mind and heart when they are excited so that they run not away with us, prayer which brings us near the Throne, and worship which lifts us above the temporal so that we see

the eternal—these all help us to trust. But it is deeper than these that the real foundation lies. As the lover can give no satisfying reason for his love but can only declare it, so the Christian has within him as a part of the very essence of his being this trust in Christ which is born first out of his own helplessness and then out of the instinctive knowledge that the Master is his best Friend.

After trust comes the obedience which Obedience. trust implies. If I trust a man I will do as he suggests. My physician prescribes and I obey. My friend asks and I hasten to answer. To obey God is to follow the motion of trust, and not to be driven by fear. Fear has its place for the wicked and the weak. To be afraid to do wrong is the hold society has upon the thief and the adulterer. But we count these as slaves who have not risen to the liberty of real living. It is not so with the Christian. He is not afraid of God, nor does he do right and refrain from evil because of assured punishment. Such adherence is prized neither on earth nor in heaven. But when I obey—that is when I do or try to do what my loved and loving Christ asks, I am led by my devotion, my

loyalty. We need to learn this lesson well, for its mastery constitutes the healthy life of a true Christian. Again and again we should ask, "Why ought I to do this or not do that?" And while the passing reasons come and take their place, such as the welfare of others, my own health, the danger of degradation, the strength of self-respect, the full response comes in the glad, almost exulting cry, "Why, my Lord does not wish me to do this," or, "My Christ asks me to do that." We shall have more to say about this in our next chapter, but we need to remember it here as a part of loyalty. And how splendidly it recreates even the language of life! We no longer say "I must" but "I love to." We no longer talk of "duty" but of "privilege." We no longer feel the burden of obedience but the exhilaration of service. We do what Christ asks because He asks it—that is reason enough for the loyalty of love.

Union with
Christ.

But trust and obedience cannot stand afar off. Indeed, they gain their power through association with the One trusted and obeyed, and the more real and constant this association, the stronger the power. Loyalty to the absent is hard, and only possible when we know that the absent one, in

spite of absence, knows and cares and remembers. In the presence of friend with friend disloyalty is unknown. Hence the Christian lives in the presence of his Christ. Upon this the Master gave many precepts. "Abide in me and I in you" was at once the expression of His own deepest longings and the declaration of His disciples' need. He knew how hard it would be to "trust and obey" if He seemed far away, and so He assured them of His constant presence: "Lo, I am with you alway." He knew how easily the mind and the heart are influenced by the senses, and so He left the great memorial: "Do this in remembrance of me." And He established that wonderful truth which modern theologians are dimly grasping after when they talk of the "immanent God," the truth that the unseen Father is within us, without us, around us in all we do or say or think or feel. Ah, the blessedness of this message, beset as we are by the temptations of loneliness, and the impression, expressed even in our hymns, that we are exiles, pilgrims, strangers, homeless wanderers, far from our Father's house! We come near—we can come near—we are near to Him Who is the Centre of our life.

Never is He away. Never does He forget. As the sparrow's fall is noted, so the struggle of one who in His sight is worth more than many sparrows is noted. Prayer is communion with Him. Thought is fellowship with Him. Battle is contest with Christ as our fellow-contestant. Only sin can hide His presence, and then He is still there behind the cloud of our disloyalty to welcome us without rebuke when we return.

Service for
Christ.

Trust, obedience, and abiding; and to these we must add service. For our relationship to Christ means such a participation of His life that we join ourselves with Him in all that He is doing and plans to do upon earth. And just here lies the splendid exaltation of our existence. If I am here just to wait in patience, as on probation, for another life to come; or if I am only struggling negatively to keep myself from slipping and the world from ruin, then it is impossible to see where the exhilaration of living can come in. The sooner it ends the sooner are we free from danger and lifted up to a longed-for peace. And with a little tinge of shame it must be confessed that too much in the past and somewhat in the present has this conception

of human existence predominated. Our hymns still carry lingering traces of it. Our prayers are colored by it. Our pulpit messages and our books of devotion are held by it. Oh, to get home! To escape this dreary round of task and drudgery! To be free from the evils which are ever at hand to swallow us up! To go "where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest!" We must not be too severe with a type of Christianity which still lingers and finds a response in our bosoms. Yet surely the thought of loyalty to Christ bids us look in another direction and hold to a higher desire. Is it the best thing to go to heaven whether we have done anything for earth or not? Is it a high thought to imagine ourselves wearing a crown of gold before we have, like our Leader, worn a crown of thorns? Is there not in us something of that lofty desire for creation which shall open our eyes to opportunities and make us see the work which our Lord asks us to do for Him and with Him? Surely the Christ in His words made this service a part of loyalty. His parables and His miracles, so plain to those who are willing to understand, tell us how the King

Work
not ease.

For definite
object.

has taken us into His Kingdom not as idlers to enjoy but as workers to bring a harvest. And when we remember that we are to work for a definite object; that the whole world of people and customs and ideas is standing and calling for light, and that a redeemed earth is to be the glorious abode of a redeemed people with a Redeemer as their Head, then the inspiration deepens and the heart beats and throbs to have a share. No mere contest against evil, but a pressing towards righteousness; not a holding of ourselves in whiteness, but a rushing into the dust of chaos to bring order; not freedom from wounds and pain, but a leaping into the foes' centre and a lifting of the King's banner, though we bleed and die in the attempt! There is the meaning of Christianity! There is the loyalty which establishes aright our true relationship to our Christ! How splendid it is, especially when we remember that all have a place in this great service. Some may go to the heathen and preach; some may take the children and open to them the truth; some may speak kind words to the disheartened; some may pray as they lie on beds of pain. But all have a part and a place to which the Christ calls them;

with all He is present, directing and blessing; to all He breathes gracious encouragement.

This is a very clear picturing, though Meaning
for me. spoken in faltering language, of the meaning of the Christian life. Let us ask now what it must mean for the individual Christian. And first it inspires him with a tremendous sense of the importance of his life. More men fail and more Christians sink into uselessness and spiritual death from underestimating the bigness and opportunity of life than from any other one cause. Heresies and schisms, suicides and drunkenness, weakness and insanity are the result of not looking life squarely in the face and seeing and knowing and declaring what a splendid thing it is to live. When once trust and obedience and union with and service for a supreme and loving Lord bring their light to bear upon the way, it is impossible to minimize or forget the glorious possible career of every human being.

Again, this truth makes Christ real. Christ
real. If we speak of a mere historical Christ, as some are fond of speaking, then there is not much to arouse intellect or enfire ambition. Great men of the past can do little

to make great men in the present. They are examples—but they are dead. If, however, my Christ is a living, personal Friend Who has dealt with me and made Himself my Saviour, then I can answer to His call. And trust and obedience bring me to Him very closely as to One Who is here in my life, even as union with Him and service for Him bring Him very near to me. The greatest essential in Christianity to-day, it has been said, is the realization of a living Christ. And if we add to this that the greatest power to make men good and useful is the realization of a living Christ present with them we have the fulness of the truth. Christ here in my life; not in heaven; not far away in the centuries in Palestine and then blotted out; not on earth as an impersonal force through His laws and decrees; but here—right here as I think and walk and work, that is what I want.

Deeper
knowl-
edge of
God.

And then, the blessed result comes in my deeper knowledge of the truth of God in all its mystery. How shall I come to know God? How shall I meet the contradictions between finite and infinite, between my desires and my struggles, between my visions which entrance me and the hard prosaic

life which binds me? How shall I know the truth of the Bible, the meaning of my creed, the mysteries of the heavens and the vaster mysteries of the earth and of human experience? Study, cries the scholar. Investigate, says the scientist. Reason, answers the logician. Only believe; you can never understand, whispers the victim of credulity. But we cannot be satisfied with any of these, for they have done so little to bring God near enough for man to see and know Him. Trust, calls the Christ Himself. Believe in Me as your Friend. Obey Me as your Guide Who loves you. Come near to Me in communion. Serve with Me to make the world good. "If any man will do his will, he shall know." And men have done the will and they have known. Out of the mystery where men said He dwelt; out of the history where men placed Him as a being of the past; out of the blind faith where men worshipped Him as an unknown and unknowable God; out of the mass of confusion in the world's past from the very beginning; out of the perplexity and the care and the mingling of sorrow and joy in the daily life; out of the future hidden by clouds and separated from

Doing and
knowing.

us by the river of death—out of these the Christ has come, as long ago He came out of His Garden Grave, and has appeared unto many and made their lives strong, their love deep, their faith like a rock and their hearts glad. Is not that what we want? Can we be satisfied with theory of the present or hope of the future or incident of the past, when life's insistent call and the heart's persistent hunger is here? Are you and I willing to go on dealing with possibilities or probabilities, hoping against hope, tired and weary beyond telling in our daily, hourly contest, lonely, and with heart aching, and crying, with no answer to be heard? Here is the Christ of our Christianity—right here. Trust Him, obey Him, draw near to Him, serve Him, and lo, He will be your Christ, your Friend, and you will have peace.

My King, my Lord, that Thou art near me, a dear, personal Christ, I thank Thee! O, open mine eyes that I may see Thee, and mine ears that I may hear Thee. Nerve my arms that I may do what Thou wilt, and make my feet winged that I may go where Thou biddest.

Then shall my heart be glad, and my life
dear, and my toil a blessing, for Thou wilt
be near me ever to speak, to guide, to bless,
to save. Amen.

CHAPTER V.

THE MORAL LIFE.

Moral life
God's
blessing.

IN considering man's relationship to Christ, we saw how the daily living must come in and must be governed by the will of God, and find its source of righteousness in man's love for God. It is very important for us to remember that the moral life is not that which fits us to come to God, but it is that which results from God's blessing upon us; in other words, I cannot really be good unless I love God, and any goodness which I may have in the eyes of men, without having a love of God in my heart, cannot, in the sight of God, be credited as worthy.

God's will
—Good-
ness.

We find in this the marked difference between what philosophers commonly call morality and Christian morality. Philosophers say that goodness exists, and that man must conform to it; Christianity says God's will is goodness, and when a man does God's will because he loves God, then

he has attained or is on his way to attain the highest and only goodness.

It is important also for us to remember that love for God must ever be the inspiration to help us to do and to be what God would have us to do and to be. I want to be a good man; now, I do not begin upon myself, to polish and to struggle, but I go to my heavenly Father and tell Him that I love Him, and ask Him to give me grace to prove my love by my life. It is even so in our relationship with each other here on earth. I wish to do what my friend thinks is right because I love my friend. Of course, my friend is imperfect, and so, I cannot perfectly abide by his judgment, but just in proportion as he is right, so my doing of his will results from my love for him.

Love for
God.

The moral life is most important in connection with the Christian because he cannot make any progress unless he does what is right, and because his love for God cannot be real unless he tries to do God's will. We find that the moral life has many conditions, many responsibilities. First of all it has to do with the man's individual life; he is bound to follow God's will in everything—his health, his occupation, his ac-

Moral life.

tivity, his kindness of speech, his charity of thought, all these things have to do with his moral living, indeed, they constitute it. If he gives way to passion, or if he lets himself sink into despondency, or if he is selfish, then he not only falls away from the ideal of perfection, but he proves to God that he does not love Him. If his heart is really full of love for God, then, while he may make mistakes and fall, he will always rebound and come back again to the normal position of his life, just as the needle of a compass will move around with the motion of the vessel but always come back to its right position.

To make
world
better.

There is also the moral life of the man as regards the world about him. He is bound not only to do right, but also to work righteousness. He is not in the world simply to take care of himself, but to make the world a better, purer place because he lives in it. Therefore, as a Christian, he is bound to do all that he can, as we saw in our last chapter, to bring the Kingdom of God. Hence, he has to struggle not only with himself but with the evil things of the world, and he has to strive not only to make himself good, but to make others good.

And again it is to be remembered that there is a positive side of the Christian life which has to do with growth. It is a very grave question whether a man can be called moral who does not advance in all of those things which have to do with health and happiness and goodness. And so he must deal with the world, causing it to advance in health and happiness and goodness, as a part of his moral living. This puts before the man a somewhat bewildering number of duties, but it also gives him the magnificent exhilaration of opportunity.

Moral
growth.

Let us think now of the practical case of a Christian in regard to his moral living. And first, it is a matter of position; he must keep his face toward God and his back toward all which is contrary to or inferior to God. So long as I look at my King and will not suffer my eyes to rest anywhere save on His face, I am bound to progress in the right direction. If I let my eyes wander after other things, and love other people better than I love my King, I am bound just in that proportion to fail. Hence, I can measure my morality pretty largely by my answer to the question, Am I facing towards God?

Measure
of
growth.

Again, the moral life is largely governed

Culture.

by one's feeling or practice, perhaps we had better say by one's discrimination. St. Paul defines culture as the ability to approve things which are excellent. The Christian, as he associates with Christ through prayer and the reading of the Bible, readily learns the things which Christ loves. Now to love those things, even as he hates the things which Christ hates, is to put himself in a moral position which will help him to live practically the moral life. Here again, we may test ourselves by asking, each for himself: "Do I hate evil? Even when I yield to it through my weakness, do I still hate it, and do I rebound from it? Is it unpleasant in its nature even while fascinating in its momentary allurements?" These two great truths bearing upon the moral life, namely, position and discernment, will be found to be wonderful helps not only in deciding what we ought to do, but in giving us power to act aright.

Hating
evil.Right
judg-
ment.

Again, we must recognize the necessity of having a clear and a strong judgment upon those questions which affect the life of a community. What Wilberforce calls the "trinity of evil," namely, intemperance, impurity and dishonesty, are foes

which are trying to eat out the life of humanity; they are the emissaries of Satan and the enemies of God. If we can only have a clear judgment which will never falter regarding these things, and if we are willing to fight in order that the will of the people expressed in law may be marked as against them, then we are bringing our own moral life, as well as the life of people in general, nearer to the position which God would have it occupy. In other words, man must have a strong determination as regards the good of the world and a constant, active participation in the struggle between good and evil.

Having
clear
views.

Of course we must recognize that in the problems of life, even those presented by the conflict between good and evil, there may be differences of opinion as to method; there may be even differences of opinion as to the violation of the law of right in this or that particular. And this is one of the hardest things which the Christian has to face, because he finds good men in whom he has confidence differing from himself in methods which to him are most important and concerning which he has a fixed opinion. In this case the Christian needs charity, he needs to call upon God for

A hard
thing.

wisdom, and above all else he needs a strong conviction which will refuse to move from its judgment unless proved wrong. We are sometimes inclined to criticise the stern old Puritans, but after all, their magnificent adherence to what they believed to be the truth and their readiness to suffer anything rather than change their opinions of right must make us admire them; and Christianity needs to-day a good deal of the same virile determination. One grows weary of cowardice among Christians, and one is made sorrowful by the ease with which a Christian will smile at the weakness of others, or even on occasion yield to it. It is not necessary for the child of Christ to go out and strike on the head every one who differs from him in any matter of right or wrong; but it is necessary that he should be so absolutely sincere and true as to let his opinions be known and to speak a word for what he believes to be right.

Enforce
morality.

The same thing is true regarding the church, which is a body of Christians. The church must not only teach morality to her members but she must enforce morality as a part of her work. The church exists first to declare God to the world, and secondly

to bring the world to God. As a part of her bringing the world to God she is bound to proclaim God's will, and in proclaiming that will she is bound to inform people of the things which violate that will. In matters, therefore, affecting public welfare and in all matters having to do with the physical or mental growth of men, she has a responsibility to bear. It is not enough for the church to say to the individual, "Thou shalt not kill" and "Thou shalt not steal;" it is for her to cry out against those things which *tend* to murder and against those things which *lead* to theft.

Let us now find how the individual Christian can bring himself to a high moral condition. First, and it is the old truth, he must keep near to God. If righteousness is God's will, then the man who knows God best is the one who can judge concerning righteousness. The man who prays, who reads the Bible and worships God in church, and knows what it is to commune with his Master, he is the man who is sensitive about goodness; he knows what God wills because he knows God.

Keep near
to God.

Second, the Christian needs to hold himself from despondency. So long as we are human we are sure to make mistakes. We

Never de-
spond.

are not angels, but men, fighting our way towards heavenly places. When we fall it is not a proof that we are corrupt or that God has forsaken us; it is only a warning that we should be more carefully on our guard. We confess our sins to God and He forgives them through Christ, and so long as we live we shall have to keep on doing it. Even St. Paul cried out, "O wretched man that I am!" But it is really the man who goes to God with tears, and asks forgiveness, and then arises to struggle again, who has the highest element of morality. Men may not understand it because they cannot understand his weakness, but God knows and understands. Never despair, my friend, because Satan sometimes gets the better of you. Remember that the very fact that you are sorry proves that you hate the evil thing.

What
counts.

And third, the Christian must remember that, after all, the battle is the Lord's, and that he is fighting under the King. Therefore, it is what the King does that counts. What I mean by this is, that we must remember that in ourselves and in the world victory is to be gained by Christ and by His truth. If I want to make men live moral lives I must bring them Christian-

ity; I must teach them how to love God and to worship Christ and to give themselves to the guidance of the Holy Spirit; then, in spite of their weaknesses, they will come to a larger and fuller life into which goodness will enter as supreme, and evil take a subordinate place. If we remember this we will be saved from much anxiety when we sometimes do not see the world growing better as rapidly as we would like. There may be, and there undoubtedly is, fault somewhere amongst those who ought to act more bravely; but when we look through the history of the centuries, we learn that it is God Himself Who is bringing the world to perfection. When I look at myself I must not be impatient, but know that the holiness for which I long is the gift of God, and will come in due time if I faint not. When I look at the world, while I hear its calls and know that I must respond to them, at the same time I must remember that it is God Who is working, and that my efforts are of avail only as He blesses them. In other words we must all lie back upon that great living power of the Christ Who said prophetically upon the cross, "It is finished," and know that He is bringing the world to Himself. We

The fuller
life.

Under the
Master.

must put ourselves under Him as His soldiers; we must bring ourselves into communion with Him so that we may grow more and more like Him; we must try to make the world conform to His standards; but all the while we must trust Him absolutely, and know that in His own time and way He will fulfil His purpose.

O Lord, I beseech Thee, teach me Thy righteousness. Help me to love Thee and so to be full of a longing to do Thy will. Help me to keep my face towards Thee, and to hate the thing which Thou hatest even as I love the thing which Thou commandest. Let me struggle for the world's salvation, and yet let me always look at the Cross, and know that Thou alone canst save. Purify me by Thine own grace, for I cannot purify myself. Give me a vision of holy things that I may love them more. Let me never be discouraged, even in the heat of the battle when the way seems long and the conflict endless. And when Thou canst, O Christ, speak to me a word of cheer, even as Thou didst speak to Thy disciples in the midst of the storm on Galilee, and say; "It is I, be not afraid." Amen.

CHAPTER VI.

THE LIFE OF SERVICE.

WE are dealing with the practical side of the Christian life, that is, the side which results from God's love for us and our love for Him. We have tried to see how we ought to live daily, and how we ought to live for the life of the world. Now let us think of the life of service which means the giving up of one's self entirely to do the will of God. It is most important for us to remember that we are in this world (and we have expressed this fact more than once) not to do our own will, but the will of God; in other words, I am not here to get rich, or to have pleasure, or to gain wisdom, or to exercise authority, but I am here to do what God wants me to do.

Service has two directions; it is towards God and towards men. Every power I Service
twofold.

have, physically, mentally or spiritually, every opportunity which comes to me of any kind whatsoever, all my time, all my daily occupations, all my associations are to be brought into this one great focus, namely, to serve God. While that may seem at first to be a little overwhelming it really is tremendously comforting. There is nothing that helps a man so much in this world as a simplifying of those things which in themselves seem confusing. Here I am with a thousand emotions, listening to a thousand calls, beset by a thousand pleadings from within and from without, my days, many or few, full of opportunity; and the whole thing is somewhat of a muddle! What does it all mean? How can I explain it? And here comes the direct answer from the dear God Who placed me here in this environment. He says to me: Everything is to be interpreted by service. All these things bring to you a call to help Me and to help your fellow man. Not one single thing you do but has an influence in the world's life; not one single thing you say but may make men better or worse. To serve Me and to serve My children is the one truth which embraces all other truths.

It may be well for us to indicate very **How rendered.** directly how this service may be rendered. In the first place, then, we want to do everything that we do, no matter how simple, in God's name. Whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, we are to do all in the name of the Lord Jesus. That makes everything holy, even the common routine of the day. It makes the struggle and the denial, as well as the breathing and the thinking, a part of the devotion of the soul towards God. It must be, then, that God uses these things in some way, we know not how, for the advancement of His Kingdom. Think of the inspiration of that! If I take care of my body, if I eat my breakfast thankfully, if I read my book, or write my letter, or sell my goods, or teach my class, or make my clothes, or play my music, or paint my picture, with the realization that in doing it I am serving God, must there not come a perfect glory of light about all these things which shall make them very dear and very sacred? There can be no question but that we make our lives far more miserable than they need be simply because we forget this great fact. A woman talks of her household drudgery, or a man wearies of the

Delight
not
drudg-
ery.

work which he carries on for ten hours a day, and they both complain that the burden is heavy, and they both look forward to the time when they can throw the burdens off, either in this world or the next. Does that seem reasonable? Is there not some way in which we can find an enthusiasm for life which shall make everything beautiful, and reveal to the eye and to the soul a splendor undreamed of before? We find such an explanation in this truth of serving God. Everything is exalted, nothing is mean or low, and the dear God stands over all, blessing and rejoicing.

Difficult
but not
hard.

As regards our service for men, we sometimes find it a little more difficult, first, because men do not understand, and secondly because they often oppose. It is hard to help a man who does not know what you are trying to do for him. There are a great many people in this world whom we would like to help, yet it seems almost impossible because they cannot see from our point of view. I cannot make my child know altogether the advantage of study; I cannot make my lazy friend grasp the advantage of early rising; I cannot induce my Christian brother to understand the joy of helping others. And yet,

this very difficulty ought really to increase our earnestness because it shows us the importance of what we are trying to do. It is not the easy work in this world that is always or generally the most satisfactory. When you have succeeded in doing a hard thing, then you have a real enjoyment. We must not, therefore, be discouraged or cease our efforts simply because men do not understand our desire to serve them. Of course we must not unduly force ourselves upon them; we must have a respect for humanity to keep us from being intrusive. But, on the other hand, we must have always an eye quick to see need, and a heart quick to feel trouble, and a nerve quick to sympathize.

It is the opposition of men which is the more difficult thing to meet. You want to establish some public good, and men who prefer the evil fight against your efforts; you want to promote temperance, and the saloon-keeper and the manufacturer back of the saloon-keeper are up in arms; you want to make your friend a Christian, and your friend, not understanding Christianity, and thinking it a bondage, fights you at every turn. What shall we say about this in connection with service? Certainly

Fighting
evils.

we must say that it demands on our part the same gentleness and persistency and love that we find in Christ. It is a wonderful thing to study the Gospels and see how Christ served men. Not merely the things He did but the way in which He did them, will afford a wonderful revelation of Christ's character. He never seemed to force Himself upon men, and He never seemed to be wearied by their opposition, and He kept on in such a strong, unceasing effort both by word and deed to do what He knew they needed to have done for them, that we are filled with admiration and wonder. We must do the same. Looking about us and seeing the multitudes we must be filled with compassion; hearing their cry we must have a response, as the Shepherd had a response for the cry of His lost sheep; and even though the ones most needing help oppose us, we must keep on, because we are doing what God wants us to do, and He, by and by, will soften the material and enable us to mould it into a beautiful likeness unto Himself.

With com-
passion.

Patience.

There are some special characteristics we need in connection with this service which we will enumerate. The first is tremendous patience. Creatures of a day as

we are, we seem to imagine that in our lifetime everything ought to be accomplished. It becomes almost ludicrous when we stop to think of it, that we little men, living on an average fifty or sixty years, and having about forty years of real useful power in the world, think that we can do or ought to do everything in creation while we live! We ought to grow big enough to recognize ourselves as a part of eternity, and to know, first, that we are going to serve for eternity, and second, that the seed sown is bound to bring forth fruit even though the harvest-time may be delayed. It is the patient man who has a larger view of things than the man of nervous fussiness; he is not worried because the return does not come immediately; he casts his bread upon the waters and is willing to find it after many days; he breathes a higher atmosphere than the mere environment of thirty or forty years on a little continent; the whole world is his, and all time is his, because he is the child of God. Patience enters into our daily life, and makes us quiet, uncomplaining, tender, gentle, and above all full of faith. Without patience little can be done in the way of true service.

The ludicrous side.

Care for
those we
serve.

Again, if we are to serve rightly we must have that love in our hearts which shall make us care for the one whom we are serving, and also care for the very service itself. We want to guard against thinking that the things we do are only means to an end. They are that, but they are really a great deal more. As everything is important in God's sight, so my very effort to do a good thing has an importance of its own. I ought to love the very words I speak and the work I do for others' sake, and I ought to love even the most unworthy of men, yes, even the most unattractive of men, because I am trying to do something for their good. This love of work for the work's sake, and this love of others because they are God's children must ever be the greatest inspiration which God, Who is Himself love, has given us.

Never give
up.

And finally we must remember that this service must be unceasing. We are never to give up, and so long as we live we are to work. Indeed, from our Lord's words we are bound to believe that we are going to work forever, even as God works. The only difference between heaven and earth, so far as toil is concerned, is that there we shall work without weariness and with-

out opposition. Think, then, how blessed it is to keep on, never to give up, always to hope, always to find new courage, awakening each morning with new determination, and starting out for each endeavor with new enthusiasm. Think of the richness and fulness of a Christian life which finds in all things a secret hidden from men but clearly revealed in the joy which comes to the worker. Above all think of the constant companionship of Him Who is with us while we serve, with Whom we are co-laborers, and Who never fails to see, and Who never will forget.

Dear Lord, help me to serve Thee. I can do little, but Thou canst make my little great. I am ignorant and weak, but Thy wisdom and Thy strength Thou wilt give to me. Help me to rejoice in my service. Help me to know that the harvest is sure. Help me to remember that Thou art near, and grant that my life may be fruitful so that at last when I see Thee Thou canst welcome me to a larger and more glorious opportunity. For Thine own dear sake I ask it. Amen.

CHAPTER VII.

PUBLIC LIFE.

WE are trying to see how the Christian has a duty, just because he is the child of God, in the world which God has made. He is to do good and work righteousness because he is a loyal child of a divinely loving Father.

In the
right
position.

We come now to think of the public life of a Christian. It is not an easy thing for a Christian man to bring himself to the right position which God expects him to hold in connection with the life about him. In the first place the world is very confusing; it is full of contradictions and misunderstandings and perplexities. Moreover there is a large difference of opinion among good people as to what things should be done and how they should be done. Then, too, there are so many great problems facing us, particularly in this day and gen-

eration, that we are made almost dizzy by the responsibility of life. And yet again, if we are truly humble in spirit we hesitate about pushing our own ideas of right or making ourselves prominent in doing the work of God. But all these difficulties ought simply to make us more earnest and more determined. We must remember that we are God's children placed in this world to do a divine work for our Father; that we have the life of Jesus Christ our Saviour as our inspiration and our strength, and that we have the Holy Spirit Who will direct us if we are only loyal and true.

There are two sides to be considered in the public life of a Christian. First, the life of example, and then the life of aggressive influence. While the Christian must never become self-conscious, he must know that he is bearing witness, and that the Master is judged by the life that His child leads. Therefore, he must avoid all appearance of evil; he must show by his words, and by his acts, and by the whole movement of his life, that kindness and gentleness which Jesus Himself showed when He was upon earth; he must avoid positively even those things which for him may be innocent, if there is danger of his

Two sides
to public
life.

Of ex-
ample.

injuring others by doing them. He must keep before him a very high ideal of personal purity, temperance and goodness, and never suffer that ideal to be lowered even by those who are dear to him. He must be faithful in those things which God bids him do, the observance of those means of grace of which we will speak later on. It is impossible for a Christian to wield an influence which shall tell unless he is a man of prayer, a man who reads his Bible, a man who goes to church, and a man who in all things rejoices to be in close communion with his Lord.

In world's
struggle.

But the most difficult part of the Christian's life is that which bids him take an active share in the world's struggle. And here we face that opinion, held for many years by good Christians and exemplified too much by the church in the past, and still held by many at the present day, that the church has nothing to do with the problems of life, whether of state or of society, and that the individual Christian must avoid all of those unseemly controversies which may tend to bring dust and stain upon his personal life. It has been said that the church should not interfere in questions of politics; that she has noth-

ing to do with the contest between capital and labor; that it is not her business to see that cities are clean, and tenements decent, and the laws regarding public welfare obeyed; and too often is the Christian told that he would be a much better and wiser man if he kept himself aloof from all these things and simply tried to serve God by living himself a pure life. We are beginning to learn now, and I thank God for it, that all this is a mistake. The church is in the world as the Kingdom of God in embryo to bring the Kingdom of God extensively. It is her business to purify the world. Christ so taught in His parables; "Ye are the light of the world." Ye are "leaven." Ye are "salt." And while Christ Himself did not establish any reforms, He gave the seed of those reforms, not only in His words but in His works. So the individual Christian is in the world to make the world better, and he is bound to enter into all of the world's life, and realize that because he is a Christian man, nothing relating to humanity can be without interest to him. It brings a magnificent exhilaration and courage to a Christian when he feels himself thus called; he finds a meaning for his life not appre-

Christians:
salt.

hended before, and he catches a vision of a glorious future which gives him hope and courage.

Three
ques-
tions.

As an illustration of what the Christian ought to do, we will take three great public questions. The first is that of purity. We live in a day, and it is not exceptional in the history of the ages, when bad books and bad plays are poisoning the minds of thousands. It is startling to read some of the books which are commonly read and commonly discussed amongst supposedly good men and women. It is still more startling to see the plays on the stage which are endorsed by their presence by even church people. As a result we have innumerable divorces, and the marriage life and the home life have been driven to a depth of wretchedness which is appalling. Now the individual Christian must not only keep himself pure but he must fight for purity. He, and the church to which he belongs, which is the body of Christ, must enforce upon the world those high principles of righteousness which shall make people see that they cannot play with pitch without being defiled. There must be a recognition of the marriage tie as a type of the union of Christ with His church, and the awful-

Purity.

ness of a separation between those who have vowed before God to love and to cherish each other until death, must be recognized. Those who play with holy things must be marked and not allowed to assume a position as if they were innocent, and warnings to the young must be given without stint. Even to-day, although much is being done, the vast majority of people fail to realize the awful extent to which impurity is weakening and destroying manhood and womanhood. There are societies for the prevention of social vice, and there are strong efforts made to save the innocent; but unfortunately, the great masses of Christian people do not take the interest in these things that they ought, some because they have a false modesty, and others because they are half-hearted. We declare without any hesitation that it is the part of a Christian man in such a struggle as this which is upon us, not only to hold high ideals for himself but to press upon others and demand that they accept the same ideals.

The next problem which faces us to-day, and it is of equal importance, is that of the relationship between the poor and the rich, between those who have not had from

Poor and
rich.

birth many advantages, and those who have had, by inheritance, great advantages. Love of money is the root of all evil, not money itself but the inordinate love of it; and to-day there are so many cases of the grinding down of the poor by the rich that it is difficult for an honest man to restrain his righteous indignation. The wretched houses in which poor people often live, owned by wealthy men; the miserable wages often paid; the long hours of employment of girls in positions for which they are quite unsuited; the work of children who ought to be in school; the cruelty towards little ones of a sadly tender age,—all these things, and many more, mark the characteristics of a conflict in which the church and the Christian must take a part.

For-
eigners.

There are faults, of course, on the side of the poor. The many foreigners who come to our shores here in America, and the many people throughout the world who have almost lost hope because of years of the pressure of poverty, make mistakes because of their ignorance; but that is all the more reason why there should not be exercised upon them the cruelty which wealth and the power of wealth often exert. The sympathy of the Christian should always

be with the poor; it was so with Christ. And while he must never be unjust in his judgments, he must recognize that the man who is in need and often in hunger, and frequently pressed to physical agony by the narrow circumstances of his life, is the one to whom his hand must go out and for whom his strength must be expended.

This problem of capital and labor is a large one, and it cannot be settled in a moment if it is to be settled rightly. There are grave difficulties both economically and sociologically which will have to be met by the growing wisdom which God will give if we seek it. But there must be a belief on the part of the Christian that it is his duty to try and solve the problem; that he dare not be indifferent; that God calls him to work in the world for that justice which He Himself has declared will be the final outcome of the world's history. We must be careful ourselves never to do those things which shall hurt others who are for the time in our power. Women, for instance, who are housekeepers, have no right to overburden their servants or to deny them privileges which are rightly theirs. Employers of labor have no right to call their employees "hands," as if they were simply

**Capital
and
labor.**

**Employers
and em-
ployees.**

machines, or to neglect that relationship to them which shall carry out the Lord's truth that we are all brothers whether rich or poor. There must be no discrimination in our churches and none in our thoughts between the rich and the poor; and there must be that readiness to help, out of a loving heart and in a wise way, those who need help. This is a large subject, and we cannot, of course, enter into it fully here, but we have said enough to show how much there is for the Christian to do if he is to be a real follower of his Master.

**Political
life.**

The third problem we will suggest is that of political life. The world is governed in various ways in various sections, but that government is the true one which concerns itself with the individual. Whether there be a king who holds supremacy, or whether the people themselves, as in our own dear 'America, hold the supremacy, there is an equal call for every man, just because he is a Christian, to take a strong, active part in the choice of rulers, in the establishment of laws, and in the reforms which, because of human imperfection, are ever demanded. The church is bound to proclaim those great principles of government which are founded upon the ten commandments.

While she is not called upon to go into any controversy which has to do with questions having no moral bearing, she is bound to warn the people against any wickedness or weakness which is to be found or which may threaten in the life of a community.

And the individual Christian is not fulfilling the law of his life unless, if he is of age, he votes conscientiously, and votes for the best man, and strives after those methods of government which in his heart of hearts he knows God would approve of. Let it never be thought that the common life, the life of the city, or the town, or the state, or the country, can be disregarded by God's children. On voting.

In closing we would say a word as to how the Christian may best be fitted for this tremendous task presented in his public life. We can but mention two or three needs which will abundantly be supplied if we ask God to help. First, there must be that love for humanity which will make us feel that the cares of one are the cares of all, and that to go through life at ease while others suffer, or to disregard the sufferings of others, is to deny the Master. Oh, if we only would love everybody as we ought, how Three needs.

Hope sees
ideals.

our zeal would be quickened and our intelligence enlightened! Second, the Christian man must be filled with a large hope which shall make him see a vision of what is to be, and strive strenuously for its realization. Hope means the catching sight of the ideal and bringing it down to the present and seeking to make it a model for service. The pessimist can do nothing for the world's good. If he thinks it is a question whether God will finally reign supreme he has already denied his Master and is a Judas. The man who works despairingly because it is his duty and not because he longs to bring speedily the day which is bound to come, cannot be of much value. He gets in the way of other people and does little himself. It is the man of magnificent hope, who never gives up and who presses on to the mark, who fulfils his Master's command, "Endure unto the end." And third, the Christian must find a joy in all of this public life of which I have spoken. It is hard sometimes to be cheerful; it is trying to see great evils which fairly tear the soul, and not weep. It is not an easy thing, when men are conservative and will not act, to go in alone and with an audacity which, in

the eyes of others, seems to contradict humility, stand for the right. But if we remember that we are God's children and that He has given us this work to do, then we can laugh and sing; difficulties cannot depress us, opposition cannot defeat us, trouble cannot destroy us. We will simply go forward with a song to hasten this old world on its way towards God, to bring the King to His Kingdom and the Kingdom to her King.

Dear Lord, Thou knowest my weakness, and yet Thou hast called me to do great things. Pour Thine own divine might into Thy servant that he may be strong. Fill him with the knowledge of his blessed calling; open his eyes that he may see, touch his heart that he may feel, and strengthen his hands that he may fight. Above all, dear Lord, give me that gentleness and that sweetness of spirit which are of Thyself, that I may always work without bitterness and strive for the highest and best without discouragement. For Thine own dear sake. Amen.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE LIFE OF FELLOWSHIP.

The
church.

THERE is hardly any more beautiful expression in our creed than this: I believe in "the communion of saints." It does not mean, as some have thought, that we have some mystical relationship to those who have gone before. That may be a part of its meaning, but it is only a part. It means the splendid brotherhood which brings Christians together, makes them enter into each other's lives, helps them to understand each other, and creates that love which led the Master to come to earth to live and die. God "hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth," cried the Apostle, and those great words should be the banner cry which shall not only bring us wonderfully near together as fellow Christians, but make us recognize the Christ of men all over the world as the Christ of our brothers.

There was a time when the church as well as the Christian man was thought to be exclusive rather than inclusive; a little body of people selected out of the world because of their adherence to truth, shutting the world out of their sympathies, and having little or no care for it. Such was the old idea of the spirit of Christianity. We have gotten beyond that, and yet we have not sufficiently realized the meaning of brotherhood. Let us think of it now for a little while.

My brother's life should be as important to me as my own, yes, even more important. I do not live for myself but for others. The selfish man is a disgrace wherever he is found, but the Christian man who is selfish is a special disgrace. The blessed knowledge that we are all fighting the same battle, that we are all facing the same end, that we all have common experiences, common joys and common sorrows; the consciousness that we all have in our bodies the same nerves and muscles, the same passions and emotions; that we all have in our minds the same thoughts and the same powers; that we all have in our souls like aspirations and like visions—this truly ought to make us very dear to each other and bring

us very near together. We must first of all realize this before we can do very much.

All are
brethren.

Now this fellowship brings us to some exceedingly practical workings. First of all it makes us know that there can be no real separations between men on earth. Whatever separations there may seem to be are of man's creation rather than God's. The color of skin, the language spoken, the possession of wealth and of intellect, or the lack of such possession, the disposition or environment, the advantage which heredity or a few hundred years of imagined superiority may have brought, all these things have no right to separate us. It is a cheap thing for a big man, who knows he is God's son, to look upon any of them as having any value whatsoever in the consideration of his duty and privilege in connection with his brothers. Therefore the Christian must not dare for one instant to give way either in thought or by action to the false standards so common amongst men which tend to divide rather than to unite. His very pride ought to keep him from permitting these things to dull his sympathies or cloud his heart.

Spirit of
oneness.

Again, there comes that magnificent spirit of service of which we have already

spoken, which makes a man happy only as he is himself making some one else happy. A pleasure possessed alone loses a large part of its richness. The things which we share are the things which we appreciate. How splendid it is when we look upon all we have as God-given in order that we may call others in to the feast! How fine to realize that all of our powers of mind and body find their interpretation in the way in which we use them for others' good! This is the lesson which comes to us every day in the smaller as well as the greater experiences. It cannot be too emphatically impressed upon us that others need us and that we need others, and that no life reaches its fulness in isolation. I think it is Aristotle who says that the man who delights in solitude must be either a wild beast or a god; a wild beast because having others in his power, or a god because feeling himself to be superior. There must be moments, of course, when a man should go away by himself and commune with himself, or with nature, or with nature's God. There must be moments of quiet when in the secret of God's presence we shall be able to find ourselves, and to hear that still small Voice speaking in

Others
need us.

comfort and cheer; but the regular and normal life must be amongst men, and it finds its force not in the delight of seeing other men act nor in the pleasure of hearing other men express their thoughts, but in doing for others that which we see they may need to have done for them. It is a poor thing to wander, as Thomas Moore says, "alone in crowds;" it is a great thing to love the multitude.

In other's
place.

Again the Christian man wants to have that understanding of others which can only come through putting himself in the place of others. I can only be of value to my friend when I try to know how my friend feels, and how he is situated, and what battles he has to fight. We often hear people cry in misery; "No one understands;" and it is a cry not so much of bitterness as of arraignment. If other people do not understand us it may perhaps in some particular be our own fault, but it is largely the fault of the other people. It is their business to understand us, even as it is our business to understand them. And, oh, the joy which comes to the man who lives in the lives of others, who feels others' woes, and understands the depth of sorrow which crushes another's heart, and

who grasps the longings which cannot be spoken, even as the Spirit of God grasps our longings and makes groanings for us which we cannot utter. While it draws the vitality out of one's life, even as it drew virtue out of our Lord when He was upon earth, this blessed understanding of others brings to us in return a peace and a loving appreciation which are the dearest gifts of life.

Fellowship is shown again in the enduring of the burdens of others. Another's sorrow is my sorrow, not merely because I think of it but because I take it as my own. In Hawthorne's *Marble Faun* the way in which Hilda bore her sister's fault as if it were her own is a fine illustration of the way in which a Christian is always bound to feel that which affects others, and to make the sorrow his own, even as the Master did Who "carried our sorrows." There is hardly anything which brings humans nearer together than this fellowship of common endurance. To take the burden from my brother's shoulders may not absolutely relieve him, but it makes him strong to bear because I, too, am bearing by his side. To weep with those who weep, and to laugh with those who laugh, is

Bearing
and shar-
ing
burdens.

like entering into the richness of nature when we feel from ocean or mountain our own feelings echoed, and know that God's dear world is itself full of that spirit which bears human burdens.

Desire to
help.

Finally, true fellowship must always imply the desire to help. We do not benefit men very much if we go down to their depths and lie there with them side by side in misery. We cannot stand on a pedestal and reach down cold fingers, or exhort, from some lofty situation of superiority, others to come up to us who know not the way. But going to the other's side we want to bring that power of our own nature so to bear upon him that he may be lifted up and made to rise by the very strength of our brotherly feeling. The parable of the good Samaritan, when rightly understood, grandly emphasizes this. The Samaritan bound up the wounds; he gave of that which he carried with him to assuage and to heal; he walked, that the sick man might ride; he brought him to the place where he would be cared for, and provided for his entertainment. It is this effort to lift men up, at first conscious but afterwards becoming unconscious, which makes the richest, the most beautiful part of Christian fellow-

ship. I love to breathe in my brother's presence. I love to hear his words, for they are sweet. I love to know that he cares for me. It is a comfort beyond expression that his heart beats in sympathy with mine and that his touch of hand is almost holy. But the richest thing as I sit by his side is the thought that he needs me, poor and unworthy though I am; he, though seemingly my superior, has need of me, otherwise he could not love me; for while love is the desire to give and the desire to bless, it is also the instinctive knowledge that the one loved has something which can satisfy my soul's hunger. That I may help the one whose presence inspires me; that I may somehow, dumbly perhaps, or by word, or by act, make his life happier, that is it which gives the cap-stone to fellowship and makes life beautiful in spite of its many difficulties. And when the Christian enters into this fulness of fellowship he finds that which he never dreamed of before—a bond which is something more than human, a love which is something more than emotion. It is the power which comes from God, Who in creating man breathed into his nostrils His own divine breath, and placed within his soul that glorious nature

**Know he
cares.**

**Fulness of
fellow-
ship.**

which can, by the grace of God, at last attain unto perfection.

I beseech of Thee, dear Lord, to give me this spirit of fellowship which shall make my Christian life one with the lives of others. Hold me from selfishness; keep me from an unhealthy desire for isolation; make me feel at home amongst men, not that I may be hidden in the multitude but that I may stretch out my hand to bless and give out my voice to speak where there is need. Above all, dear Lord, in order that I may be bound closely to men, do Thou bind me closer unto Thyself, that from Thine own blessed nature there may flow into my soul that divine power which I can use amongst men and so bring them nearer to Thee in bringing them nearer to myself. I ask this, O divine Brother, in Thine own name. Amen.

CHAPTER IX.

CHURCH LIFE.

WE have already said that the Christian is to be a brother to all men, but we must not forget that God has established a family in Christ which is, as it were, a circle within a circle. Those who believe in and accept Christ, those who are called and hear the call, those who obey the Master's precepts, are all gathered into what the Master called His family, and what was soon called the church. The church is not a body of good people, but a body of people who are trying to be good. The church is not an ecclesiastical association of those who establish a certain code and are governed by certain rules, but it is the blessed company of all those faithful people who, loving Christ and trying to do His will in the world, enter into a relationship which the Master Himself has established.

What
church is.

It is well to remember, that which so many people forget, particularly those who

Not body
of saints.

themselves are unmindful of their duty, that the church is not a body of saints. There always have been and always will be some black sheep in the fold, even as there was a traitor in our Lord's little body of twelve; and those who belong to the church are weak, and feel the need of the strength which God gives, and do not set themselves up as examples, but are rather as arrows pointing towards the Leader and King of all. That was a fine testimony which the people gave concerning John the Baptist: "John did no miracle," they said, "but all things that John spake of this man were true." The church thus becomes a body of witnesses. The church members are loyal to their Lord. They fall, but they rise again through His mercy and grace. They are ignorant, but they learn through the wisdom which He imparts. And so little by little through the centuries, in spite of its many failures, in spite of divisions, in spite of bitter controversies, in spite even of wars brought about through imagined loyalty or a kind of frenzied enthusiasm, the church of God stands to-day as the manifested power in the world pointing towards God and working for righteousness.

Now the Christian man is a member of the church. What is there for him to do in the life of the church? His own particular church or parish is a part of the whole and represents for him to a certain extent the whole. There is where he lives his life. There is where he worships. There is where he hears the word of God, and receives the message of God, and there God for a shorter or longer time has placed him in order that he may be useful in the divine service. What has the Christian to do here?

What to do.

First of all he must realize that the church is not a little ecclesiastical body, but that it is a body of guides, who having seen the light, shed that light upon the way of others and ask them to follow it. The Christian must know that he is a member of the church in order that he may bring others in to the joy and fellowship which he has found. Even as the church at large is a light, so the individual parish or church is a light, or should be, to brighten the way of those living near, and to hold up a high standard for men to follow. No Christian has any right to feel himself independent of the church to which he belongs. He may not be a slave, dropping

Guides and workers.

his own individuality, nor is he to consider himself as simply the mouthpiece of a body of people to which he belongs; but he is to know that he is of the church in order that he may bring the church's blessing and God's to those who need it. Loyalty, then, is necessary.

Unhappy
divi-
sions.

We must pause here for a moment to say a word about the unfortunate divisions of the church of God. Without going into the history of the past, we find Christianity to-day unfortunately divided, and while the great foundation principles of the truth of Christ are accepted by all, there are differences of administration so marked that there is not between the divisions the fellowship for which we long and for which Christ prayed. It is a condition which cannot at once be remedied. We must pray, and we must do all we can to draw near to each other in active service and in common worship, but we must be loyal to our own church; and loyalty does not mean narrowness—a narrowness which would blind us to the good in others or make us critical of them,—but it means a spirit which should make us thank God for the privileges which are ours, and lead us to do all we can where God has placed us to

bring the world to the knowledge of Jesus Christ. The subject of church unity is a great subject, and I believe we are coming nearer, though unconsciously perhaps, to a solution. But the individual Christian can best serve to hasten the coming of an answer to his Master's prayer that they all "may be one," by doing all that he can in his own denomination to work and to pray and to serve, meanwhile holding himself as one with all those who confess and call themselves Christians.

**Church
unity.**

The Christian man, then, in his church must first of all be a worker; he has something to do in that church. Coming to worship once or twice on Sunday and feeling that he has so fulfilled his obligation is to show an ignorance of the meaning of church membership as unfortunate as it is, alas, too common. If the church is meant to serve as a leaven in the community then there must be that mixing of the meal with the leaven, or rather of the leaven with the meal, which shall make the church a power for good. This is done by various church organizations; it is done by the charitable work which the church carries on; it is done by its missionary activity; it is accomplished by its efforts to bring in those

**Members
are
workers.**

Takes part
in all.

who are estranged or astray. If the Christian is alive to his privilege he will take part in every one of these activities. The Sunday-school, the Bible class, parish organizations, the classes for arousing missionary interest, the efforts to bring in outsiders—all these things will be so intensely real to him that he can no more think of neglecting them than he would think in business of neglecting his mail or of passing by an opportunity to advance his trade. It is a crying shame that there are so many Christians to-day who are doing absolutely nothing in their churches. They worship once a week, and then the church is no more to them (unless it be as a subject of criticism) than the man in the moon! As a result they not only grow weak in their spiritual life but they lose a magnificent opportunity.

A place for
education.

Again, the Christian must feel, regarding his church, that it is a place for education in all those things which relate to Christ and His truth. It is not a meeting place only, that is, in the sense of meeting others or even of meeting God; it is not a formal assembly where people, without regard to each other or knowledge of each other, bow down before the Almighty; it

is not a place merely for spiritual delight; that is, we do not go to church only in order that we may be calmed or quieted and find repose for our souls. All of those things are good and right, but the church must mean something more to the Christian man. If Christ is in His church as He has promised, and if He has given to His family on earth certain gifts such as the Bible and Common Prayer, and Baptism, and the Lord's Supper, then there must be a spirit of education by which the man through the church is taught more and more of his Master's truth. Let it not be thought for an instant that we would imply that the individual Christian is not taught directly by God. The Holy Spirit leads us into all truth in our own lives. But, on the other hand, it must be remembered that the church is intended to teach the Christian through her services, through her united prayers, through her reading of God's word, and through the teaching of those who have been prepared for this blessed task. She teaches him regarding his duty and how he should perform it. She teaches him regarding his Christ, what He has done and what He is doing. She teaches him the fellowship of which we have al-

Taught of
God.

ready spoken. She brings him face to face with opportunity. She makes him see a vision. She calls him to enthusiastic struggle. She opens his ears that he may hear the cry of those who know not God. It is a splendid thing to realize that the church is a teaching power under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and that that teaching power is not confined to Sunday worship but is carried on all through the week in various ways, not by the ministers alone or chiefly, but by the people working under the guidance of the ministers.

To seek
and save.

Yet again, the Christian owes it to his church not only that he should be loyal and that he should receive the teaching offered, but that he should forward its every endeavor to do what God declares should be done. In other words, he is not only a worker in a general sense, but he is a soldier with his eye alert and his hand ready, marching onward against the enemy or to rescue those who are besieged. The idea of a church member standing with a gun to defend is rather poor; the idea of a church member going out with his staff to draw in under his leadership the multitudes who are as sheep without a shepherd is inspiring. Now the Christian

may be very faithful in his church duties, and very loyal, and very teachable, and yet if he does not, like his Master, seek and save the lost and bring them to this body of faithful people who shall nourish and comfort and declare the brotherhood of man, he misses a great part of his vocation. Every Christian man should be a feeder of the church. It is not the minister's business alone to guide wandering youth, or to inspire those who are discouraged, or to visit those who are sick, but it is the part of every church member under the minister's leadership to do these things. The wonderful field thus opened is full of sunshine and clothed with flowers for the man who enters in. The strong influence which the church has through its representatives, the gratitude felt and expressed not only to the individual but to the church of which he is a member by the sick and afflicted, the prisoner and the dying, must always stand as one of the richest and finest rewards of the Christian life.

A shep-
herd.

Finally the Christian in his church life is bound to stand firmly and positively upon the great principles of his faith, while at the same time he seeks to make that

Firm for
truth.

faith so simple that a child may read and understand. I think sometimes the church member holding loyally to the truth, makes that truth confusing rather than clearly helpful to others. There ought to be a spirit of interpretation which should make the faith of God held by His children easy for the poorest and the most ignorant or the most prejudiced to accept, and it is the part of the Christian to do this thing. He is not to weaken the faith by paring away any of its essentials; he is not to meet doubt by calling unimportant the thing doubted; but he is to be so full of the spirit of the truth himself that he will be able to make it attractive and dear to those with whom he comes in contact. This is the spirit of the Sunday-school teacher. She loves God so much that she knows how to make her children love Him; she accepts His word so thoroughly that she knows how to lead others to accept it. It is the privilege of every member of the church in like fashion to interpret the word of God to men. The business man in his business, the housekeeper in her home, the traveller on his way, the man or woman at the summer home or in vacation time, should all have such a quickness to make real and

Interprets
word of
God.

vivid the great truth they love that others will find no difficulty in at least understanding it and perchance in giving their adherence to it. Ah, what a blessed privilege it is when a man, as a church member, so loves the things which God has given to His family that he seeks to bring them to others and display them in such a fashion as to arouse their admiration, perchance their envy, and at last their acceptance! The man who loves his church can do this, and will do it. The Christian who is loyal to the family of which he has been made a member will count it a high privilege thus to bring men nearer to God.

Dear Lord, Who hast brought Thy people together and called Thine unworthy children members of Thine own family, and hast been pleased to bid us look up unto Thee as our loving Head, teach me, I beseech of Thee, the privilege of church membership, and show me how I may do Thy will where Thou hast placed me. Let me never forget why Thou hast established Thy church and the work which Thou hast given her to do. Let me never forget that I am a part of the church and that I must fulfil my responsibilities if I would

prove my love to Thee. Help me in all things to be faithful; and at last bring Thy church to that glorious transfiguration when, fair as the sun, clear as the moon, and terrible as an army with banners, in one united phalanx she shall march on towards the gates of righteousness and receive from her King the banner of victory. Amen.

CHAPTER X.

THE MEANS OF GRACE.

WE have been considering in our previous chapters the relationship which man is to bear to Christ in the way of moral living, in the way of service, in the way of public duty, in the way of brotherhood, and in church life. The natural question must come to the mind of an earnest man, as he considers all these demands, as it came to the mind of St. Paul: "Who is sufficient for these things?" And indeed it would be impossible for any man to fulfil in any degree these obligations were it not that God has graciously provided helps whereby we can be made strong and fitted for the work we have to do and the life we have to live. "Our sufficiency is of God" says the great Apostle; and when one realizes that his Father stands behind him ready to give him grace to do and to be all that he ought to do and be, then he can go forward without hesitation. We will con-

sider in the next few chapters, therefore, the way in which God helps a man to be a true Christian and to hold himself in the loyal relationship to Christ which is demanded.

How
helped.

It is well for us to remember that God deals with us in our spiritual life very largely as He deals with us in our physical and mental life, and that there is no more mystery in the laws which have to do with the life of service towards God than there is in the laws which have to do with the strength of the body or the intelligence of the mind. I cannot be strong in body unless I eat and drink and sleep and take exercise. I cannot understand how doing these things can help me; I only know that they do help. So I cannot be strong in my mind unless I think and read and study, and reason with men who are wiser than myself. I cannot tell how these exercises benefit me; I only know that they do benefit me. Even so is it with the spiritual life. If I want to hold myself in that true relationship to Christ which is the part of a Christian man and which alone can lead to happiness, I must read my Bible, and pray, and go to church, and do all those things which God has provided for my

spiritual sustenance. I cannot tell how these things help me; I only know that they do help me, through experience.

It is a little curious that there are many people who accept without any questioning the laws governing body and mind, and yet reject, or count as of no importance, the laws governing the moral and spiritual nature. They are certainly inconsistent, for they recognize in themselves certain moral functions which are guided by what are commonly called the precepts or the habits of men. For instance, a man who wished to be considered a gentleman would not think of acting discourteously in the presence of ladies; a man who wished to develop high and pure ideals would not think of such a thing as placing himself continually in an atmosphere of degradation and wretchedness and evil; he knows perfectly well that his moral nature is affected by the atmosphere in which he lives and by the actions which he may or may not do. Must it not be equally true that the spiritual nature, that is, the nature which loves God and communes with Him and seeks to grow more like Him and longs to do His will, must obey the laws governing the spiritual nature—laws which

Law of the
spirit.

have been distinctly given by God Himself and which have been proved to be effective in the lives of millions of God's children?

We must remember that even our Lord Himself when He was upon earth, because He was both human and divine, used these means of grace and so set us an example. If the Son of God humbled Himself to use the very graces which He brought to earth for the good of men, must we not believe that we who are only human cannot get along without the use of the same graces? We know that our Lord prayed. We know that He was familiar with the Old Testament, particularly the Psalms. We know that He worshipped in the Temple, and we have every reason to believe that His home in Nazareth was one of faith and of purity and of love. "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man," St. Luke tells us, and this growth in divine and human favor must have been nourished, just as His growth in wisdom and stature were nourished, by those things which were provided as spiritual food. We cannot, as servants, hope to be above the Master.

Efficiency
of grace.

It is a wonderful thing, too, to realize how the use of these means of grace proves

their efficiency. Every true Christian man can give evidence of the way in which he has found new courage and new inspiration from reading God's Word. Every loyal servant of Christ can tell how by prayer he has been comforted and exalted and granted power to do and to endure. After all, the way to test the efficacy of the means of grace is to use them, and it is an assured fact based upon God's promise and verified by human experience, that no man can sincerely and honestly follow God's laws of spiritual development without finding himself increasing, as did our Lord, in favor with God and man.

It would hardly seem necessary to warn against the merely mechanical use of these means of grace were it not that there have been ages in the church's history when it was thought sufficient to go through the form regardless of the spirit. To say so many prayers, to read so much of the Bible, to go to church so often, and yet to have no love in the heart and no desire for better things, must of course be useless; and yet there are many people, even to-day, who think that the outward observance of these laws is all that is necessary, and they find their mistake too late, and the mistake

**In spirit
and
truth.**

affects not only themselves but others. They that worship God must worship Him in spirit and in truth. Therefore, in using these means of grace we must bring the desires and longings of our hearts, the simple love for Him in Whose fellowship we desire to live, and the constant devotion which will make the holy things of life dear to us.

Spasmodic
Chris-
tianity.

It is necessary to say a word here about the regularity with which we use these blessings which God has left for our development. There is a good deal of spasmodic Christianity which is hot to-day and cold to-morrow, which is faithful one day and faithless the next. Such spurious Christianity can never satisfy. It is the regular, persistent, earnest following of truth which gives truth an opportunity to enter in and do its work. Day after day, hour after hour, line upon line, precept upon precept—so the will of God is fulfilled in man as in nature. Oh, if men would only “keep at it” in the development of the spiritual life, how gloriously they would prove the faithfulness of God’s promise! To pray without ceasing, to find God’s temple the dearest place on earth, to make His Word the companion of life—

this is to meet with the sure abundance of God's blessedness.

What shall we say as to the spirit in God works. which the Christian should approach these blessings? First, surely this, that he must know that they are powers through which God works. Even as God works through the sunshine and the rain upon vegetation, and even as He works through the voice and the written page in mental development, so He works positively through these things which He has asked His children to do. It is a glorious thing to realize, as we hold our Bible in our hands, that God's eternal power is back of the Book to make His Word quick and powerful. It is a marvellous and yet absolute truth that as we kneel to pray, God's mighty Spirit is working in and through that devotion of ours, even as the Apostle says when he declares that the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with unutterable groanings. When we enter the church where God has promised to be with even two or three who are gathered together in His name, it is inspiring to know that God's power is there just as really as it is in the atmosphere our bodies breathe and in the light which our eyes perceive. In other words we must al-

ways remember that it is not merely the effect upon ourselves subjectively but the divine power of God from without working through these means of grace that must prove them effective. To pray and to read the Bible sincerely will bring results, manifestations of God's might, just as really as touching the button will flash the room with electric light, or as moving a lever will cause the engine to start on its way and pull its load behind.

May God give us grace to use these means of His providing sincerely, reverently and believingly, and may He help us to love Him all the more because of this gracious providing of His whereby we are enabled to become purer and nobler and to grow into His image and after His likeness.

Dear Lord God, for all Thy mercies, and especially for the gracious provision which Thou hast made for my growth I praise Thee. I feel my own weakness. I cannot bring myself to the holiness which Thou dost ask and which I desire. As I look upon myself I am in despair, but when I look to Thee and see Thy gracious hand stretched out, and know that I can

grasp it and be lifted up, then indeed am I comforted. Help me, O gracious Master, to do those things which Thou hast commanded, and to find in them a fulfilment of Thy promise as my life by Thy grace grows purer and my love for Thee deeper! For Thine own dear sake. Amen.

CHAPTER XI.

THE BIBLE.

IF God has made us and if He is our Father, we must expect that in some way He would communicate with us. It is inconceivable to think of God giving life to His children and loving them, and yet being silent through all the ages since man first began. We should expect a Bible even if there were none. One can readily conceive of men hungering and thirsting for a message from their Creator and unwilling to give up the search for some revelation of Himself.

God speaking.

That so early in the history of humanity God did thus speak is but a proof of the way in which our expectations are always met by our Father. In the Garden He spoke to our first parents. He guided the actions of Noah. He revealed Himself by word of mouth to the patriarchs, and then when Moses was called He bade him write down all of these revelations in or-

der that future ages might know them and profit by them. He has spoken through His Prophets since the world began. And when the Master Himself came to earth He gathered about Him those who later, by the Spirit of God, wrote down His words and told of His works; and so we have our Bible as it is to-day. It is a wonderful proof of God's care and a marvellous answer to the natural longing of mankind.

We cannot here give a history of the formation of the Bible or of its translation into English from the original languages in which it was written. There are many books bearing upon this phase of the subject with which the Christian ought to be familiar. We desire rather now, first to show what the Bible contains, and secondly how the Christian man should use it. The Bible, then, is to be considered as the revelation of God. It gives us the only history we have of the life of the world from the time when the heavens and the earth were created down to the time when the Christian church was well established upon the earth. It is a glorious panorama. We see man placed upon earth by the Almighty to govern it and to enjoy

The revelation of God.

it. Then man by disobedience fell and there began that long struggle upward which is still continuing. God revealed Himself more and more in laws and in gracious promises to strengthen and to encourage in the struggle. He established amongst His chosen people sacrifices which were types of the one great Sacrifice which He planned in fulness of time should be offered. Then came the Master Himself Who is the Centre and the interpretation of the whole Bible, for the Old Testament points forward to Him and the New Testament tells of Him. And He, the Christ, gained for mankind the victory and showed men how they might make that victory their own, and how they might grow into ever richer fulness and goodness. Then came the early workers in the church, and guided by the Holy Spirit they established Christianity over all the then known world; and finally St. John on Patmos saw a vision of the glorious consummation when all things should be finished, and the world and man perfected in the presence of God.

Bible
genuine.

There have naturally been enemies of the Bible who have doubted concerning its being the Word of God, and who have not

hesitated to look for mistakes which would defeat its usefulness as a revelation of the Almighty. And there are to-day, even amongst nominal Christians, some who count the Book as no better than many other books, interesting because of its age, but full of errors and unreliable in many of its detailed facts. Let me say here most positively that all of these attacks in the past have proved futile. The Bible stands to-day stronger than ever before. Every real discovery which has been made, whether of manuscript or of tablet taken from the earth, has proved, even in minute detail, the authenticity and the genuineness of this Book. We need not be afraid of any examination or criticism which man can bring in connection with the Bible. It is God's Word, and we can rely upon it, and need not fear lest human ingenuity should contradict the truth of the Almighty. It is well to have an open mind and not to attack the men who are honestly seeking to learn more about the formation and contents of the Bible; but on the other hand we must not let our faith in its message be weakened in any particular, but go with assurance to this Book and hear God speak through it.

Use of the
Bible.

Now, how can we use the Bible as a means of grace? Let us be very simple. First, every Christian should have a Bible of his own, which he should use and which he should not hesitate to mark and to bring into association with every dear event of his life. One loves to see a Bible full of little sacred tokens which none can understand save the one who owns it. One loves to find marks and dates and perhaps a written expression of some emotion, or a record of some event on the margin. These things all prove the way in which this blessed Book has become a lamp unto the feet and a light upon the path. Second, we must read the Book and be familiar with all of its wonderful events and teachings. This is partly an intellectual study, but it also affects the spiritual study. It is unworthy for an intelligent man to be ignorant of the great events and characters of the Bible, and he who would profit by it must have both Old and New Testament so clearly fixed in his mind as to make a reference or a quotation quickly to be recognized. Again, there must be the devotional use of the Bible at least once a day and better twice a day. In this use of the Book the Bible

should be taken in the hand and a little prayer offered to God before it is opened, that He would send His Spirit to guide and to reveal His truth. Then let the Bible be opened and some devotional passage, such as a Psalm or some words of our Lord, be read. It is not wise to read too much. A few verses, or a verse, or even part of a verse may be sufficient, for what we want to do is to get food to strengthen us in our lives. We may read, for instance, the 121st Psalm: "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help." Perhaps that one verse is enough. What does God intend to teach me from those words? That I should look up, not down; that I should look to Him Who is like the strong mountains in His love and in His truth; that I should realize His help which has been promised and which can never fail; that I should keep my eyes fixed upon Him Who is my God and never lower them. There is my message for the day. I am strengthened and refreshed. Or I may turn to some words of the Master, for instance, those found in the 15th chapter of St. John: "Ye are my friends." That is enough. I stop just there. I am Christ's friend; not a

servant, not a slave, not one who is afraid, not one who is shut out from the dearest and holiest part of my Master's nature, but one who is admitted as a companion, one to whom He speaks from the depths of His divine love, even as I can speak to Him with naked heart. I am not alone, because I am the friend of Christ. I cannot fail, because His friendship will sustain me; unworthy though I am, the great strength of His love will surround me. Here I have the message which I need and by which I am enabled to live.

**Bible devo-
tional.**

This devotional use of the Bible should be observed, as I have already said, at least twice a day. The "quiet hour" when we are alone with God, even although it may be brief, should be sacred, when with Bible in hand we listen to Him speak and rejoice at the sound of His voice.

**Bible in
need.**

Then we should use the Bible in times of necessity. It is easy to laugh and cry "superstition" when people open the Bible at random to get a message of guidance in some great crisis of their lives; but after all, these people have a deeper faith than we often imagine. If we would accustom ourselves to go to this Book in

time of need and expect a message from God to sustain us we would find ourselves always rewarded. Times of joy and times of sorrow, times of trouble and times of perplexity, these are all met by Him Who has given to us this revelation of His love and of His truth. We can never fail to receive help in time of need if we go thus boldly to the fountain of wisdom which God has provided.

Yet once more, it is well for us to learn by heart certain portions of the Bible. They will not only serve us at times when we may not be able to read, but they will come to us again and again as a refreshment in the weary land of our pilgrimage. To know by heart the 23rd Psalm, the 51st Psalm, the 121st Psalm, and the 14th chapter of St. John, and the 13th chapter of 1st Corinthians and the 22nd chapter of the Revelation is to have a store of richness and comfort which is real and inexhaustible. A clergyman told me not long ago that he found the most useful thing in all his life to be the Bible verses he learned when he was a Sunday-school scholar. To learn one verse every day, perhaps in the morning, and to keep repeating it through the day and trying to

**Bible re-
freshes.**

grasp more and more of its meaning, is to use, as God would have us use, this blessed Book.

Bible mes-
sages to
me.

One word more. Let us always remember distinctly that God is speaking to us individually. It is not merely a general message we are reading but it is a word which the Father addresses to each one of His children, and that word has a direct application to each child's need. You may read a verse and I may read the same and yet it will convey to each of us quite a different message because each of us has a different need. It is often useful to change the pronoun in reading the Bible so as to make it more personal. For instance in the 14th chapter of St. John we might read: "Let not thy heart be troubled. Thou dost believe in God, believe thou also in me." Or we may take the dear Lord's Prayer, and read it: "My Father Who art in Heaven, give me this day my daily bread." It is this personal message which makes the Book so dear and which sanctifies it in a peculiar way to our use.

Thank God for this Bible which can never fail in the future as it has never failed in the past to guide God's people in their journey through life, and to be a com-

fort and blessing to every individual child of the Master.

Blessed Lord, Who hast caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for my learning, grant that I may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn and inwardly digest them, that by patience, and comfort of Thy Holy Word, I may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life which Thou hast given me in my Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen. (From P. E. Prayer Book.)

CHAPTER XII.

PRAYER.

To speak to God and to hear Him speak to us must surely lift us nearer to Him and make us feel the reality of His presence and the greatness of His love for us. Prayer is communion with God; it is that fellowship which brings Him Who is invisible right into our lives and makes Him the blessed Companion of every day and hour. "Lo, I am with you always," or "all the days" said Jesus, and He must have meant that His presence would be like that which the disciples enjoyed when He was upon earth, only without the physical contact. That is, if Jesus is with us as He was with them, walking over the roads of Palestine and sitting on the mountain-side, then we must hear His voice and talk to Him even as they heard and talked. The fact that we cannot see Him does not for one instant contradict this blessed truth, for we know, even by modern discovery, the joy of communicating

with one whom we cannot see and whose voice we cannot hear. If the traveller in mid-ocean can send a message to those at home and receive a message in return, is it any more wonderful that the dear Master, Who is ever with us, should speak to us and we to Him although we can neither hear nor see?

If we really love Christ—and we cannot help loving Him if we read the Gospels—then we will find the greatest comfort of our lives in talking to Him. Not only at stated times but unceasingly will we pray; not only by pouring forth words but by the very emotion of our hearts will we speak even as friend talks with friend though no word is spoken, the eyes and the consciousness of the presence and the heart carrying on the conversation. It is all wonderful but it is all true; and the man who prays is invariably the man who enters into the largeness of the spiritual life, and understands the presence of God in all His world. That beautiful hymn which tells us that

“ Prayer is the burden of a sigh,
The falling of a tear,
The upward glancing of an eye,
When none but God is near.”

is an exact description of the life of one who communes with God.

Private
prayer.

Let us now consider how we ought to pray. First, there must be the regular private prayer of morning and night. It is a great pity to neglect the morning prayer as many do. It is just as important as the night prayer. We need to realize the presence of our King in the daily life and to feel that that presence goes before us, even as at night we know that it follows after us. The fiery and cloudy pillar which protected the Jews as they came out of Egypt was a light by night and a cloud by day. When we pray we should enter into our closets and shut the door—so our Master said. We want to be alone with Him, and although sometimes it may be difficult to secure this isolation it is most important if we would have the full blessedness of the communion. Then we should sit for a little while in absolute stillness. Most of us talk too much in our prayer and do not give God an opportunity to speak. Let us listen a moment for His “still small voice” and rejoice that He comes near to greet us. Oh, how He loves us, and how wonderfully tender is His voice as He, like a Father, tells us of His

love and of the plans He has for us in our lives! It is well for us, too, to remember before we begin to speak ourselves, Whom we are approaching—the great, eternal God, Maker of heaven and earth, Who has come to listen to one of His children—the loving Father Who made us and Who has prepared a home for us after this painful life is ended. How beautiful He is, how loving, how patient, how wise! How tender He is in His approach to us, not breaking the bruised reed nor quenching the smoking flax! Here in this moment of solitude the great First Cause of all things comes to us and listens and speaks and blesses.

Then let me pour forth my supplication ;
let me tell Him all the story ; my troubles,
my needs, my joys, my sorrows, my friend-
ships, my longings—let me tell them all to
Him Who is far more interested than any
loving mother can ever be in the experi-
ences of her child. Let me ask Him to
bless those near and dear to me. Let me
tell Him of my work and how I have ap-
parently failed or succeeded. Let me
tell Him of my doubts and how I find
it hard to believe, particularly in hours of
darkness. Let me tell Him of my visions

Telling our
needs.

and how I long to be what I know He would have me be. Let me tell Him of my enemies and ask Him to forgive them and to grant me the grace to forgive and forget. Let me whisper the names of my dearest and best and plead with Him to do that which He is more than ready to do, pour upon them His choicest gifts. Such prayer filled with thanksgiving and adoration cannot fail to make me a stronger and a better man.

**Public
prayer.**

We must not forget public prayer. We shall speak in our next chapter of worship, but here let it be said that no private prayer can be effective unless it is associated with public worship. The man who goes to church and prays there is the man who prays in private. The two are very distinctly associated together. Let it also be remembered that family prayer and grace at meals cannot be forgotten if we really love God and desire His help. The decay of the family altar, that is, the giving up of family prayers, undoubtedly lies as a very large cause for the breaking up of the family in many unhappy cases. No wonder that divorce and separations and unhappiness through incompatibility of temper should be so frequent in our

American land when seldom if ever the family are gathered together for morning or evening devotions! Until we have family prayer regularly we cannot look for a reformation in the immorality so sadly associated at present with married life. There should also be that expression of gratitude to God before we eat which is the part of courtesy as well as of religion. For a man to nourish his body with the food which God gives and yet never say "thank you" is to prove himself, no matter how much he may pride himself upon his courtesy, as lacking in the first elements of a gentleman. There is no reason why we should not bow our head wherever we are and say "thank you" to God before eating a meal. Whether people approve or disapprove it is no reason why we should forget this courtesy of life and fail to remember that it is a part of prayer.

We must remember also to pray for our enemies—those who hate us and spitefully use us and persecute us. It is hard to ask God to bless them when we feel as if they ought to be cursed; but if we expect mercy ourselves from God, we must plead for mercy upon those who are cruel to us even as the Master prayed for His perse-

Prayer for
enemies.

cutors, saying: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

Prayer al-
ways.

And finally let us remember that we go to God unceasingly in prayer when we are conscious of His presence, and commune with Him as we walk on the way. It is a blessed thing to realize that even as He notes our down-sitting and our up-rising so He is about our paths and knows all our ways. To speak to Him as naturally, when some beauty impresses us or when some need tries us, as we would speak to a friend by our side; to call upon Him as instinctively as the child calls upon its mother in time of need; to feel in our loneliness the great comfort of His blessed presence; to remember that He, though we are sorely tried, is bearing our infirmity with us—all this is to know what prayer in the Christian life means and how it can enrich and strengthen our character.

"Oh, when the heart is full, when bitter thoughts
Come crowding thickly up for utterance,
And the poor common words of courtesy
Are such a very mockery, how much
The bursting heart may pour itself in prayer!"

Dear Lord, teach me to pray. Help me to communicate with Thee in spirit. Let

me never forget that Thou art near, and that Thou dost love, and that Thou dost care, and that Thou wilt help. Let me bring my troubles to Thee and my joys and my friendships. Let me bring my work to Thee and my problems and my enemies. Let me feel Thee near me as my Best Friend; and O, Lord, fulfil Thy promise, and answer and comfort Thy servant. For Thine own dear sake. Amen.

CHAPTER XIII.

PUBLIC WORSHIP.

GOD has established men in families and He has bidden them feel their common relationship as brothers. When He drew His own people to Himself He yet more positively made them feel their brotherhood. They were to serve one another; they were to help one another, and they were to worship together in their common love for Him. Amongst the Jews in the early patriarchal days the father of the family was the head and the priest in his own household. There is every reason to believe that he was accustomed to gather the family together at stated intervals for sacrifice and instruction. Later, or after the Children of Israel came out of Egypt, while the family idea still ruled, it was merged into the larger idea of God's chosen people, and the tabernacle was built and carried with them all through their forty years of wandering. In it they were

accustomed to assemble and in it the daily sacrifices were offered. After entering the promised land the tabernacle still served as a centre of worship, though the people were too scattered to go to it very often. There seem to have been at this time smaller places of worship called "synagogues" which corresponded largely to our modern churches. By and by the great temple built by Solomon in Jerusalem took the place of the tabernacle which for a long time had been in Shiloh, and the regular order of worship which God had commanded through Moses was continued. There were ministers, called High Priests, Priests and Levites, and the people were accustomed to assemble and worship together. Synagogues were still kept up in various places and there the people assembled every Sabbath Day to hear the Scriptures read and to join in the worship. After the Christian Church was established and the observance of the first day of the week, the Lord's Day, took the place of the observance of the seventh, there still continued the same public worship, and the people gathered together to offer to the Almighty the sacrifice of praise and prayer. Down to the present time this has

Temple
worship.

continued, and we may well believe that it is in accord with God's will, since by this public worship men have been made stronger, instructed in holy things, and drawn nearer to each other.

The importance, then, of public worship cannot be impressed too strongly upon the Christian man. It is commanded by God, both by precept and by the example of His people; it is necessary for our own strength and comfort, and it is the means whereby Christians can work together for the welfare of mankind.

Christian
worship.

Let us now see how the Christian man should use public worship as a means of grace. First of all, he should attend regularly. Nothing but sickness, or some imperative duty which he can bring conscientiously before God, should keep him from going to church. Moreover he should go at least twice every Sunday. The Jews had the morning and evening sacrifice, and corresponding to these, all through the centuries, have been the morning and evening worship of God's people. The Lord's Day is holy and should be observed as holy. All of the commands of God concerning the Jewish Sabbath, which was the seventh day, rest upon the Christian as concerning

the first day, which is now kept because Christ arose from the dead on Sunday. We have no right to work on Sunday. We have no right to play in the ordinary acceptance of that word. The Lord's Day is not a gloomy day, but it is a day when we should change our occupation and give our minds to God and His truth, and try to help men in acts of mercy. The Christian to-day cannot take too strong a stand about the observance of Sunday. There is grave danger of its becoming a holiday, particularly because of the influence of the great number of foreigners who at home have never been accustomed to observe the day. No nation can prosper where the Lord's Day is not righteously observed, and no individual can expect a blessing to rest upon him who does not sanctify it and keep it holy. Therefore the day must preëminently be given to worship. The people of God are to assemble together to hear His Word, to pray to Him, to give Him thanks, and to listen to His message given through His ministers. It ought to be looked upon as a privilege rather than a duty to attend church. If we could only realize how the dear Father is waiting to bless us and comfort us and help us we

would go eagerly and nothing could keep us away.

Ministers
human.

Because we are human it is sometimes difficult, with our modern forms of worship, not to be influenced by the ability or the habits of the minister; but the true Christian ought to be big enough to realize that the minister is only a man like himself, whom God has set apart, not as holier than the rest of His people, but as a leader for their devotions. If people would pray for their ministers more and criticise less there would be a great improvement both in the conduct of public worship and in the ability of the ministers themselves. But let it be remembered that there can be no excuse for staying away from church in the mere fact that the ministrations of a pastor are not altogether acceptable.

Join in
worship.

The true Christian joins heartily in the worship; he lifts his voice with his fellow Christians in praise and adoration; he listens attentively to God's holy Word; his heart goes up in the prayer which is offered, which is the prayer of all God's people assembled together, and he feels that his own personal prayers which he offers during the silent moments of the worship hour are doubly strong because

they wing their way to heaven with the united desire of God's church. Oh, the blessedness of these quiet moments in public worship! We cannot think too highly of them. God is there in His church, and as we pray He hears, and hears, if it were possible, with even greater love than when we pray alone, because we are praying in the assembly of His people.

We cannot accent too forcibly the duty of the Christian to join in the worship. He is not there merely to receive but to render to Almighty God thanksgiving and adoration and praise. It is an error to imagine that we go to church simply to get something. We do indeed receive all that we long for if we go in the right spirit; but it is our privilege to offer up to Almighty God there, in His peculiar presence, the gifts which we have brought—our love, our gratitude, our service, our lives, ourselves. It is easy to realize, so far as the human can, how the Almighty must rejoice in the worship of His children on earth, even as the angels cause Him joy by their worship in heaven. If there is joy in the presence of the angels of God, and the expression implies that the joy is God's which the angels see, when one sinner

To get and
to give.

repents, how much more must there be joy when God's people are gathered together and bow before Him in adoration and love! The Bible is full, from Genesis to Revelation, of instances where God's people thus worshipped Him, and as we shall by and by join with angels and archangels before the great white throne in rendering our thanksgivings and praise to Him Who has loved us and redeemed us; so let us here on earth rejoice in giving to Him with all of our hearts the love which is His due.

Blessing in
need.

There should be in this public worship a sincere faith on the part of the worshipper, first, that God has a blessing for him individually as for all His people, and secondly, that God will fulfil His promises to those who there offer unto Him their petitions. It always seems to me a peculiarly beautiful thing when some special need is brought before God in His church. It may be a prayer is offered for some sick person, or for some one who is travelling, or for some one who is in sorrow. There falls a silence over the congregation as if the very presence of God was felt. Or when some public benefit is asked for, such as a deliverance from sickness, or a victory

in time of moral conflict, or help in some great undertaking, then there seems to be a reality in the people meeting together to implore God which is a proof in itself that God hears and answers. If all Christians prayed in church on Sundays as they ought, and if each individual Christian felt himself truly a part of the whole body, and individual needs as well as general needs were brought before God by the minister, how wonderful would be the result! The church would take her power, which is waiting for her, and go forth mightily to conquer. Men would realize that this world is already the Kingdom of our God and of His Christ, and they would turn from their evil ways and grant their allegiance.

It ought to be remembered that the church is for public worship not only on Sundays but on week days. To shut the church up Sunday night and keep it locked all through the week seems to deny our Lord's words when He said: "Mine house shall be called a house of prayer for all people." It is true that in many cases it is not possible to hold many services through the week; but there are almost always one or more meetings for prayer in every church

Open
church
daily.

which should be attended if possible. We lose sight of God too readily, particularly in these times when we are pressed all through the day. To meet for prayer in the middle of the week or on special days is like entering into the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.

Blessings
of wor-
ship.

What are some of the blessings coming to the Christian from public worship? First surely this, that he feels the reality of God's love for all His people. Secondly, that he feels himself drawn nearer to his fellow strugglers in the battle of life. You cannot pray alongside of a man without feeling that sympathetic touch which God Himself has given to humanity and which implies common brotherhood. Thirdly, there comes a strength for the battle of life which can be found in no other way. The man goes out from the holy hour spent in God's presence with a new determination to struggle and with a new light of hope in his face. He feels that the world is God's because God has everywhere these sanctuaries where His people worship Him and which make the earth holy, and he feels assured that the wrongs which meet him on every hand can never prevail

against the divine and overwhelming glory of God's goodness.

Finally, the Christian realizes that he receives grace directly from God in the church. When the minister gives the benediction at the close of the service it is not merely a form, an indication that the service is ended. Nay, it is far more than that; it is a declaration that that which God's people have sought has been found, and that it will follow them out into their lives. When we sing our hymns it is not a formal act, but it is that which really establishes in our hearts the harmony of God's peace. When we listen to the Bible reading it is not the mere rehearsing in our ears of old time-worn truths, but it is the bringing to us from God treasures both old and new which will nourish us and make us nobler. And when we bow before the Almighty, offering up our common petitions, it is a virtual drawing from Him of that grace which He is more ready to give than we are to seek. Oh, the blessedness of public worship! Let the Christian never neglect it. Let him cry in the words of the great singer of Israel: "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth

Grace
from
God.

for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.”

O, dear Lord God, I thank Thee for Thy church and for the privilege of worshipping Thee in the midst of Thy congregation! Let me rejoice in the opportunity which Thou dost thus afford. Let me come with a song and with a prayer to be united with the many songs and prayers which Thy people offer. In the silence of Thy sanctuary let my life find its rest. In the sweetness of Thy presence let my soul find peace. Through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

WE come now to the last, and in the minds of many the most important, of all the means of grace which God has given. There have been through all the centuries diversities of opinion and sometimes very hostile divisions concerning the Lord's Supper. No matter what opinions our own church may have, we must try to avoid saying or teaching anything which shall hurt a fellow Christian. This service is too holy and blessed a privilege for us to permit it to descend into the arena of controversy. We will, therefore, in this chapter seek to reveal in the simplest way this great privilege which the Lord has given to His people.

The story of the institution of the Lord's Supper is a very beautiful and simple one. Our Lord sent His disciples to prepare for the Passover which He was to eat with them. In accord with His instructions

How instituted.

they found a room prepared; they made ready the Passover, and at the evening hour they all came together to that upper room which has been in the minds of Christians ever since the holiest place in Jerusalem. After supper He took bread, and blessing it, and dividing it, He gave it to His disciples saying: "Take, eat, this is my body." And then He took the cup and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying: "Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." "This do in remembrance of me." Thus our Lord established this sacred feast and bade us observe it in memory of Him. And the church ever since, through all the centuries of struggle, of division, of trial and of suffering, has never failed to do what He asked. Whether in the little Scotch church, or away in the islands, or in the gorgeously appointed cathedral, or in the quiet little village church; whether in this language or that; whether amongst the barbarians brought to kneel humbly before Christ, or amongst the kings and learned men of civilized lands, from time to time this simple thing has been done—bread has been distributed after the giving

of thanks in memory of Christ's body broken for us, and wine has been distributed after the giving of thanks in memory of Christ's blood shed for us.

We would commend very strongly a little book written by Ian Maclaren (John Watson) called "In the Upper Room." It is one of the purest and sweetest of devotional books ever written, and one cannot but feel that the great Scottish preacher was especially inspired when he wrote it.

"The Upper Room."

Now what does this service, which has been rendered in memory of our Redeemer ever since He was on earth, mean to the individual Christian? First, it must mean what Christ said it ought to mean, a memory of what Christ has done for us all. We remember that He died that our sins might be washed away. We remember how the Cross has become the symbol, not of degradation or of death, but of exaltation and of life; and our minds, as often as we eat the bread and drink of the cup, are carried back to the great central fact of the world's history—to that glorious light which is drawing irresistibly the world to itself—the crucifixion on Calvary. No man can gaze upon this wonderful scene without being made better. No man

What the Supper means.

can remember how Christ died for him without rejoicing that his sins are forgiven, and without receiving strength to resist sin more earnestly in the future.

Our Lord's
love.

Again, this service proves to us our Lord's love in that He longs to be remembered by us. "This do in remembrance of me." Could anything touch our hearts more strongly than this request? The Lord wanted to be remembered. As Dr. Watson says in the little book already noted: "Remembrance by our friends is what we all long for." To be forgotten is the greatest agony of life. And here we have the blessed Master Who came to earth for our sakes, pleading with us that we should remember Him. When our memory is thus brought to rest upon Him do we not recall all of the familiar events of that blessed life? We remember the song of the angels, and the humble birth in Bethlehem. We remember the childhood's years in Nazareth and the boyhood's courage in the temple. We remember the beginning of those three years of ministration when St. John baptized Jesus. We remember the temptation in the wilderness, and the unceasing acts of mercy and love which fell like jewels from the hand of the dear

What it
recalls.

Christ all through the years when He so-journed amongst men. We remember His gracious words of mercy and of comfort and of peace. We remember how He drew sinners to Himself and never repulsed them. We remember how He loved the birds and flowers and little children. We remember how He drew His disciples near to Himself and spoke to them, and so to us, great words of comfort. We remember how at last He died and spoke from the Cross seven great words which have come down to us and have been treasured by us as the last words of the King. We remember His rising from the dead and His ascension into heaven. And as we remember we know that all of these things were done for us and are being done for us to-day; that the same dear Lord is born in our hearts even as He was born in Bethlehem; that the same dear Lord is working in our lives as He worked long ago in Palestine; that the same glorious Christ is healing our infirmities and giving us courage; and we remember how His promise once spoken is a promise to us sure of fulfilment, that at last we shall rise from the dead and enter into the many mansions prepared for us.

No man can remember all these blessed, holy things—the most blessed and the most holy that history affords—without being made purer, better and more God-like.

Till He
come.

Again, we remember how St. Paul says, (1st Corinthians 11:26) “As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come.” This must mean surely that the Lord’s Supper is a great act of faith. That every time we do as our Lord asked us to do in this matter we are signifying our confidence in the fulfilment of His promise. He will come again. We shall see Him in the clouds of heaven. He will gather us, each one of His loved children, whom He knows by name, unto Himself. He will call us to enter into the joys which He has prepared, and the old world will at last recognize and worship her King. The Lord’s Supper thus becomes a glorious declaration of the fulfilment of all our hopes, the answer to all our prayers. It is like lifting up an ensign upon the mountains. It is like raising the standard in the midst of a hostile and threatening multitude. It is like the glorious shining of a light in a dark night telling us that there is an end to our wanderings. It is like the music which the

heart can hear in the midst of all the earth's confusing cries, music full of rich harmony coming from the throne of God to help us in our battle. Surely we need just such a declaration as this. We have it in our prayers when we pray as our Lord bade us, "Thy kingdom come." We have it in our creed—that old creed which we all accept—when we say, each for himself, "I believe." We have it in our hymns when we sing together of the Rock of Ages Who will at last hide us in Himself. We have it in our Bible when we read those blessed words, "Behold, I come quickly." Now we have it in an act which we can do. As we take bread and wine, for which we have thanked God, and partake of them, it is a great and precious declaration of the good which at last shall be ours.

The Christian needs then this dear ob-

servance, first, in order that he may be obedient to the King Whom he worships and Whose name he bears. The loving Christ before he died asked us to do this in remembrance of Him. Can we be loyal followers unless we not only formally obey but long to do this thing which He has asked? Secondly, the Christian needs to observe the Lord's Supper in order that he

**Meets our
needs.**

may have brought before him positively and clearly that great picture of Calvary, which means for him and for the world salvation. Alas, that in these modern days with modern ideas of religion, Calvary is being obscured, and the man Christ Jesus in His glorious life is made to shadow the Cross to which alone humanity must cling for salvation. There never was a time when the church needed so strongly to hold to the Lord's Supper as an evidence and remembrance of the death on Calvary as to-day. And finally, if the Christian would have a definiteness in his progress he must know whither he is going as well as whence he came. He must keep his eyes fixed on the future, as Browning beautifully says: "Front and back as either should be." The Lord's Supper is a declaration of the great thing which is to come; it is a declaration of that for which the Christian is struggling and longing and praying; it is the interpretation of his missionary effort to bring all men to God; it is an affirmation of the great love of his soul which in the midst of a naughty world holds up the banner of Christ crying: "This and this alone is drawing me onward and blessing me."

May God grant that even as through all the centuries this dear service has been observed, and as, without doubt, it will be observed through the centuries to come until the Christ is once more in our midst, so the individual Christian may never fail to count it as one of the rare privileges of his life. May God keep us from neglecting it and from failing to do what the dear Master asked us to do in memory of Him.

Ever to be
kept.

O, Thou crucified Redeemer, I thank Thee for Thy great love shown by Thy request that I should not forget Thee. I thank Thee for that holy hour in the upper room when with Thy loved ones about Thee Thou didst give proof of the salvation which Thou didst come to bring, and didst give promise of the glory which shall at last cover the earth. Help me, I pray Thee, humbly, and with repentance, but oh, with great love in my heart, to do what Thou hast asked in remembrance of Thee. Grant that I may never forget Thee in my daily life, and that all of Thy words and works, as well as Thy great and crowning sacrifice, may be ever in my mind. And help me, as I struggle on, to find my

steps stronger and my sight clearer because they are fixed upon that great day when I shall see Thee face to face. For Thine own dear sake. Amen.

CHAPTER XV.

SACRIFICE.

HAVING spoken of Christ as the Centre of the world's history and light, and of our relationship to Him, sanctified by His relationship to us, and of the way in which we ought to live if we really believe in Him, and of the means of grace which He has given in order that we may serve Him truly, we come now to think of some of the characteristics of the Christian life. There are so many phases of human living and so many perplexities which from time to time face us, that it may be well for us in a few particulars to gain a clear survey of the field in which we are engaged. Let us look, first, at ourselves, and realize that great law which governs every man, even as it governed Christ in His humanity, and governs the whole universe—the law of sacrifice. “God so loved . . . that he gave.” Those wonderful words can never be forgotten either in their expres-

**Character-
istics of
Christian
life.**

**Law of
sacrifice.**

sion of divine compassion or in their declaration of universal self-denial. No man can live unless he sacrifices himself, and just in proportion as his love seizes upon his life does he enter into that fulness of self-denial which is his joy, his delight and his comfort. We are here in this world not to get, but to give. Even as the mother gives of her vitality that the child may be nourished; even as the father gives of his virtue and activity that the family may be provided for; even as the friend gives to his friend in order that the friend may have all that is needed,—so the Christian finds his very life, not in the things which he gains, nor in the things which he possesses, but in the things which he gives up, which he loses, which he cares nothing for in comparison with his desire to help and bless the world.

Giving no
loss.

Sometimes there is a dread amongst people lest too much be given, lest the individual suffer through the loss of things of which he denies himself that others may have. I read the other day, in an interesting little book written by a physician, of the way in which some lives draw so strongly upon other lives that they are like vampires, sucking the life-blood and yet

never satisfied. That may be true in some cases, and yet I am inclined to think that the individual who really loves others can no more keep back his vitality, can no more help giving, than the dear Christ Himself in His great love could help laying down His life that others might live. It is the man who, like his Master, gives his best, even his life, for others' good, who knows what it really is to "follow after" in the steps of his Lord, and who gets the most satisfaction out of life. The true man soon learns that there is not very much of good in the things which he possesses. He does not despise them, he does not scorn them, he does not even refuse them when they come to him, but he finds that those things which enter into his life either through his own struggle or through the generosity of others are not the real things. It is when he takes strength out of his own soul and gives it to another, it is when he takes of his own heart and lets another be the stronger for the affection thus imparted, yea, it is when he looks at his own desires, his longings for sympathy, his hungering for words of kindness, and his yearning for rest, and makes these the guides in doing for others—then it is that he enters into

the largeness of manhood, and grows, unconsciously perhaps, like his Master.

Sacrifice
and the
Cross.

This law of sacrifice makes the cross very simple in the common life of man. We often speak of "bearing the cross" in connection with the sorrows and troubles of life, the sicknesses and the afflictions which come upon us without our will and without our effort; but really we have no right to call these "crosses." They are burdens, indeed, which we must bear patiently; they are trials which we must really be glad to endure because they bring us nearer to Christ, but they are in no sense crosses such as was the Cross of Christ. For His cross was *voluntarily* assumed, that is it came to Him because of His loving service for others. If my trouble has come upon me because I have been trying to help others; if my sorrow is breaking my heart because I have given of my very best to help another, then I can claim my cross and feel that I am bearing it after my Christ. In other words sacrifice must be voluntary, born out of love and offered with prayer.

Sacrifice
not
gloom.

Do not let us think for one moment that this law of sacrifice adds any gloom to life; it is just the reverse. In common experi-

ence the man who gives of his best for others' sakes, even although he may feel the weaker because of his denial, is really the happier for it. The illustration already given of the mother pouring forth her own vitality for the child's nurture proves where true happiness lies. Is there any one happier in the growing life of her child than the mother? Is there any one more richly rewarded than the father as he sees the fruit of his toil in the family well cared for and growing in character? Is there anything finer in a man's life than the knowledge that his friend is being deepened and held in all noble things by his own effort for him, even although he himself is left on his way in terrible and agonizing loneliness? The real happiness of life—happiness which endures and happiness which is not like the laughter of fools or the “crackling of thorns under a pot,” but which thrills through the whole being—is the happiness which comes from sacrifice. A great writer has said that in every strong life there are shelves upon which are laid by things which the man has put out of his life for the good of others—things not wrong in themselves, things which he even had a right to de-

Tokens of
virtue.

mand, but things which expediency bade him lay aside in order that he might more readily learn the way of true service. It might be added that there are sacred places in the life of every man where there are tokens, not so much of the things of which he has denied himself as of the virtue which has gone out of him and in going has left glorious scars upon him. The wounds which have been made by one's own hand in order that others might conquer; the marks which have been brought by secret conflict for others' sake—these, after all, are the greatest treasures which at last will shine in the man's heavenly life, even as the wounds in the hands and feet of the Master will shine.

Use of
time.

Let us now very simply illustrate how the Christian should sacrifice himself for others' good. Take, for instance, his time. How much time, he might well ask himself, am I giving simply to myself, my own pleasure, my profit, my advancement, and how much of my time am I giving to the good of others? It is rather startling when one honestly considers such a simple question as this, for he is pretty sure to find that selfishness rather than sacrifice claims a large share of his days. Or let

him think of his money, and see how much of that which he possesses, be it much or little, is used for his own personal profit and how much is used directly or indirectly for the profit of others. Ah, but it is startling indeed when we face plainly an answer to this question! Take an instance in another direction. Look at the morning or evening private prayer and see how much of that prayer is given to supplication for others and how much to supplication for one's self. Do we not generally pray for others, if we pray at all, at the fag end of our devotions, bringing them in as if they were a very unimportant part of our prayer? Evidently, then, others must occupy a more important place in our time and thought and service than we ourselves, evidently we must turn upside down our common way of living if we are really to be followers of the Master.

Use of
money.

Use of
prayer.

Again, this sacrifice wants to come within definite lines; that is, it is not merely what we give up in a general way but what we are giving up for some definite and positive person or purpose that tells. It is far easier to sacrifice one's self in the general enthusiasm of life than it is to give up even little things for the sake of

Specific
sacri-
fices.

some one person or some one object. And yet sacrifice which is not definite loses half its flavor. What am I sacrificing for the sake of missions, for instance? What am I sacrificing for the sake of the poor? What am I sacrificing for the sake of the sick? Of what am I denying myself because of the ungodly whom I would bring to know their Father? Surely that is more telling than the general indefiniteness of enthusiastic sacrifice! But it can be brought more closely still to the life. What am I doing for this special missionary in his work? What am I giving up in order that I may help this sick or poor man? Now the clear personal relationship enters in, even as it entered into the life of Christ Who died for each one of us, and so made a definite personal sacrifice.

Joy of
sacrifice.

But we must hasten to say a word about the joy of sacrifice which enters into the life of one who lives not for himself but for others. And first, that joy comes from the deep consciousness that one thus finds the meaning of living. The man who denies himself knows well enough that he has gotten down to the root of things, that he is not trifling with mere emotions but that he is dealing with character. And nothing

so surely satisfies and brings joy as a realization that one is doing something worth while. Secondly, the joy comes in seeing the result. It is not always seen immediately. It may be a long while before it is seen. Perhaps it will never be seen in this world. But the man knows that sometime the sight will come, and because of that he is joyous. He knows that the sacrifice he has made, though friend or foe may not dream of it, will one day be recognized. He knows that the secret sorrow or the secret suffering brought by his own brave effort will at last receive the gratitude of the one for whom the cross was borne. This brings to him a great, rich symphony of joy which is beyond all expression. And lastly, there comes to him that consciousness of communion with Christ, of union with the great Eternal in the daily life he is living. The very sacrifice which has become the desire and the offering of his soul makes him understand God's love, and brings him into association with that love as nothing else in the world can. He feels the thrill of God's approbation; he understands the meaning of Christ's words and works; the life around him seems transfigured, and his own strug-

Thrill of
doing.

gling career, trying though it may be, and full of tears, becomes luminous in the glorious rays shining from above. He knows as none other can know the meaning of song. He knows as none other can know the strength of prayer. He knows as none other can know the peace of God which passeth all understanding.

Dear Lord, help me to live for others. Root out from me that selfishness which is the poison and the death of all good. Give me a readiness to do for others no matter what it may cost me. Give me a desire to pour out my own vitality that others may live. Teach me how to let virtue go out of me that other lives may be strong. And bring me ever into closer communion with Thine own dear Self through this law of sacrifice. Amen.

CHAPTER XVI.

CONSECRATION.

THE sacrifice of which we spoke in our last chapter is not an easy thing, but it becomes easier if we are consecrated. Consecration means the giving of one's self absolutely to the purpose for which one was made. It comes from the same word which is translated "holy." Anything is holy which fulfils God's will concerning it. The grain which grows in the field; the sun which gives life and light to the world; the rain which moistens the earth, are all consecrated, that is, they fulfil the will of God. When a man keeps his promise to another he is said to be loyal, that is he fulfils his word, and that is consecration. Sometimes this word is called an oath; that is, the man signs his name in the presence of a Notary or a Justice of the Peace and holds up his hand in affirmation. In the courts he sometimes kisses the Bible. All this means that the man is consecrated, he is sworn, he is bound to tell the truth

What consecration is.

Complete
giving.

and to act the truth, to do what he promised to do. Now God has a will for every one of us, and just in proportion to our loyalty to that will and our effort to fulfil it are we consecrated men and women. To be holy is not at first to be perfect or to be sinless. It is to keep the eye fixed upon God, and the heart full of such love for Him that the mind and the body will seek to do His will. A study of the Bible, which always holds a high ideal before us, must convince us that God recognizes us as His children, and through Jesus Christ counts us holy when we love Him with all our hearts and try to do His will. Consecration, then, means a complete giving to God of all that we have;—body, mind, soul, life, thoughts, love, associations, work, friendships—everything is to be given to God. And when we say given to God we mean two things. First, that we are to realize that our first duty is to Him and that our first thought must be of Him; and second that we must strive to use every power as God chooses. Instead of this being a life of slavery it becomes a life of glorious freedom. It is only slavery amongst men when the slaveholder is imperfect and faulty, and since all men are

imperfect and faulty of course slavery on earth is wrong. But when we note that God is perfect, and that His will is for our happiness and our eternal joy, then to do His will absolutely is not bondage but is blessed liberty. St. Paul calls himself the "slave of Jesus Christ." He uses the word significantly, for he means that he cannot, must not, wishes not to do anything save that which shall please God.

Practically, then, what do we mean by a consecrated man? Evidently we mean a man who looks to God and tries his best to please Him. He thinks of God first. He talks to God as to a friend. He listens to God that he may hear His voice above all other voices, and he rejoices in that glorious friendship which the Almighty has for His children. He goes on his way with a single purpose and does all that he has to do with a single end in view. Life is simplified; problems, although they cannot be solved, become clear; trouble, although hard to bear, because we are human, becomes dear because it means something; our lives become the gift of God, and the whole man is made radiant by the atmosphere of heavenly light in which he has his being.

**Think of
God first.**

Purpose
single.

Let us now see how this consecration touches the daily living of the Christian. First of all it holds him to a single purpose. He is to do what God wishes. He has his friends and he wishes to please them. He has his work and he wishes to succeed in it. He has his ambitions and he strives to rise to their fulfilment. He loves life and enters with avidity into all of its bright opportunities as well as its dark contests. But through all and governing all there is this one glorious thought: he is serving God. The opinions of even his best friends, the desires of his heart which are human, the work which he loves, all these are subservient to the one truth that he loves God first and wishes to please Him first. It can readily be seen how this must oftentimes change one's method of living and oftentimes make one seem to others, and perhaps even to himself, foolish and unwise. The ways of men are often contradicted by the will of God. Even things which seem good in the eyes of men are oftentimes evil in the eyes of our Christ. But knowing that the Infinite can never make mistakes, and in glorious loyalty to Him, the man goes on, disregarding criticism, disregarding even his

own apparent temporal welfare, disregarding his own heart's longings, if there is a clash between any of these and God's will.

In the second place this consecration touches the whole of life. We shall speak in our succeeding chapters about the consecration of body, mind and soul, but let us see now how wonderfully this holiness to which God calls us exalts the whole being and makes it a part of God's universe. God cares for my every act no matter how small it may be. God cares for my single words no matter how trivial they may seem in my sight. God cares for every moment of my life, with the occupation which fills it; nothing is unimportant. That which oftentimes causes us to fail is a false discrimination between things, as we say, important and unimportant. The man thinks it makes very little difference what he wears or how he eats so long as he is honest, but this true consecration tells him that God is interested in what he wears and how he eats even as He is interested in his greatest thoughts. The woman calls many of her daily duties drudgeries, and while she does them faithfully she esteems them simply as necessities and of no especial value compared with fine thoughts,

**Fills the
whole
life.**

Common
duties.

great deeds and noble aspirations. But God looks upon that which she calls drudgery as just as important as her aspirations and actions. George Herbert expressed the truth finely when he said: "Who sweeps a room as in Thy sight makes that and the action fine." We can have no difficulty in proving all this when we remember how God in nature cares for the very simplest things—the color of the flower, the habits of the insect, the tint of the sky. Our Lord Himself speaks of God's noting the sparrow's fall. All these truths are parables to show us that God counts every single thing in connection with our life as important.

Mother
and
child.

The love of a true mother for her child gives us another illustration. Nothing in that little child's life is without significance to her—the color of its eyes, the breathing, the beating of the heart, the little ribbons which adorn its dress—every single little trifle is of great importance to her, not only because she loves the child but because she has a consciousness, hard to explain, that each one of these things has an influence or may have an influence upon the child's nature and life. It is when a man rises to the bigness of living that he

finds trifles disappear. Everything is big because he looks at everything in a big way, that is, in God's way. I remember, when a boy, seeing my uncle put on his coat. It was rather a threadbare coat and there was nothing elegant about it, but my uncle had a way of putting it on which made it appear in my boyish eyes like a kingly robe. I think that is the way in which the man who has caught sight of God and knows God's relationship to him looks upon everything he does; little things become big because he does them in a big way; duties become privileges, and the light of the divine will touches and transfigures every single part of his life.

Sanctifies
all.

Again, let it be noticed how wonderfully this consecration brings harmony into life. If all that I do is of importance, then everything has its place and life becomes a splendid mosaic to be completed by and by so that I can see it in all its glory. Any one who has visited the Gobelin tapestry factory in Paris will remember how confusing the threads look as the workers weave them in and out. The wrong side of the tapestry is a mingling of varied colored threads which conveys no meaning or suggestion of meaning. But when the

Brings
har-
mony.

observer passes to the right side then he marks the wonderful picture which the artist workers are making, and he knows how every single thread has had a share in the beauty before him. So it is with life. We are weavers. Every single thing we touch has to do with the glorious completion which we shall view at last in God's home. All are to be brought together, and the imperfection of one will mar the whole. It is said that in the buried cities which have been excavated in the Far East the carelessness of the workmen who built centuries ago can be detected in the walls of the houses. The best work has endured the longest and shows the care of the one who constructed it. So, we must remember, it is with our lives. The consecrated life counts everything as of importance because of the great whole of which it is to form a part.

Joyous
power.

And yet once more, we want to remember that holiness brings a joyous power of its own to every little action of our lives. It may be a small thing to write a letter, but if that letter is really a message from my heart it has a touch of divinity in it. It may be a small thing to read a book, but if that book makes me either better or

poorer than the importance is manifest. How splendid it is to realize that we are dealing constantly with things which are holy or may be made holy if they are cared for aright! How it exalts and makes of power everything in the daily life! I can go forth joyously to do my tasks and to bear my burdens and to meet my friends or my enemies if I know that I am treading on holy ground. The Almighty is looking down upon me with great love and tenderness, and He placed all these opportunities in my hand as jewels, and bids me value them and love them and rejoice in the handling of them.

And finally, this great truth of consecration makes us realize what might be called the sacramental character of everything. A sacrament is an outward sign of an inward grace. Every action has its message. When I awake in the morning I at once remember the glorious resurrection when I shall arise to eternal life. When I take my morning bath there comes the significant truth that I am only clean when I am washed in the precious blood of Christ. As I put on my clothing I remember that my nakedness is only covered when I place upon me the garments of

Makes
every-
thing
holy.

Christ's righteousness. As I eat my breakfast I remember that the true nourishment both for the body and for the soul comes from God. And so on, all through the day, everything has a beautiful message for me and gains value in my eyes because of that message. It is a wonderful satisfaction to study everything and find its inner meaning. When Christ spoke to His disciples in parables He meant a great deal more, I think, than is generally understood. He wanted to teach them, and us through them, to look beneath the surface in all things and find the riches hidden there. Every trouble has some word for me of great import. Every joy has some message, deeper than the surface, to bring to me. This is surely a transfiguration of the whole life, and makes all things wonderfully rich.

This truth may be well summed up in those beautiful words of Frances Ridley Havergal:

Conse-
cra-
tion
hymn.

“ Take my life, and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee.

Take my moments and my days;
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.

Take my hands, and let them move
At the impulse of Thy love.

Take my feet, and let them be
Swift and 'beautiful' for Thee.

Take my voice, and let me sing
Always, only, for my King.

Take my lips, and let them be
Filled with messages from Thee.

Take my silver and my gold;
Not a mite would I withhold.

Take my intellect, and use
Every power as Thou shalt choose.

Take my will, and make it Thine;
It shall be no longer mine.

Take my heart, it is Thine own;
It shall be Thy royal throne.

Take my love; my Lord, I pour
At Thy feet its treasure-store.

Take myself, and I will be
Ever, only, all for Thee."

Dear Lord, I thank Thee for this blessed truth of consecration. Truly I am Thine, not only by Thy creation and Thy preservation but by the way in which Thou hast given me all things, and hast a plan by which I am to live. Help me, I beseech of Thee, to look upon my life as holy. Let me try to live in accord with Thy will. May my first thought be of Thee, and

help me to remember that everything, whether of joy or of sorrow, which may come to me is sacred because it is meant to make me more like Thee in a consecrated life. For Thine own dear sake. Amen.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE BODY.

WHEN God made man He made him in His own image and after His own likeness. We cannot fathom the full meaning of those words, but we know that they must mean this, that man was not made as the beasts of the earth were made, but that he was fashioned after a heavenly manner. When we remember that when God came to this earth He took upon Himself the likeness of men, we are impressed with the fact that the body must be holy. If Christ had a body like mine, only perfect, then it must be that He considered the body a holy thing. When I remember that the Holy Spirit has come and dwells within me, making my body His sanctuary, "the temple of the Holy Ghost," then again I am impressed with the sacredness of this body. When I remember that Christ after His resurrection had the same body, only glorified, which was His when He died;

Body a
temple.

that He ate and drank with His disciples; that the wounds in hands and feet and side were visible, then again I am impressed with the fact that the risen body must be identified with the human body. And finally, when I remember that Jesus took that glorified human body up into Heaven with Him, then I know that this body of mine, which is at last to be exalted, through the mercy of Christ, to the home which God has prepared for me, must be a holy thing.

Care of
body.

I think it is only comparatively of late years that we have begun to realize this. Even the early Christians looked upon the body as vile, and thought only of the spirit of man. There were not wanting amongst the early philosophers those who scorned the body and counted it as of no importance whatsoever. To starve it, to mutilate it, to beat it seemed to be not only natural but a duty, to express the scorn for that which seemed to be full of passion and strong to lead the mind and spirit astray. As a result of all this false thinking there was not very much progress even amongst Christian people in the way of human physical development. Now we know that God wants us to worship Him with all of our strength

as well as with mind and soul. We know that we are to cultivate the body and make it strong, beautiful, pure, a fit temple for the Holy Ghost, because if we are redeemed it will live forever. One cannot but rejoice in the modern athletics which tend to a development of all that is good and true in the physical nature. Not only have athletics done much to make men cleaner in mind and purer in life, but they have accented that self-respect which can only be felt when a man knows that every part of him is sacred. Of course athletics may be carried to an extreme and the body injured rather than helped, but in spite of this we are bound to remember that a sound body is a part of God's will for men.

This respect for the body because it is to live forever, will have a great effect upon the ordinary life of every day. To keep the body clean, to walk as one should, to eat healthy food, to sleep sufficiently—all these things are a part of Christianity. The man who neglects his body sins against the temple of God. The work of the physician as well as of the physical trainer is a high one. He is to guard the body, to make it well when it is ill, to understand all of its parts, to measure the importance

Develop
the
body.

of each part, and to develop the weaker parts so that they may perform their share in harmony with the rest. It is splendid to think that the work of a physician is not merely to cure when there is sickness or to heal when there are wounds, but that it is to anticipate and prevent, so that the body may be able to perform the duties entrusted to it.

The body
in wor-
ship.

This same truth makes us realize that we are to worship God with our bodies as well as with our minds and souls. It is not meant that we should unceasingly prostrate ourselves before an invisible God, or that He demands certain postures when we worship Him, although these things are not without their significance; but it means that we are to feel, when we walk or sit or exercise, that our bodies are given to us by the Almighty, and that we are made in His image, and that therefore we can worship Him with our bodies, that is, we can use them for His glory and cultivate them for His sake. Nothing is more inspiring than this thought of the body's use in the world as a holy thing. The man who goes to his business with head down and feet heavy not only misses the healthy elasticity of life but he is forgetting that God calls

for his body to worship Him. Why should he not, no matter how heavy the burdens may be which rest upon him, hold up his head, and walk with elastic step, and breathe deep breaths because he feels the blessedness of being alive, and knows, as the blood thrills through his veins, that he is to serve God with the best member that he has? And side by side with this worship comes the service which the body renders. The mind can do little save as the body works with it. “A sound mind in a sound body” is not only a philosophical but a religious expression, and a man wants to hold his body in harmony with the rest of his being; he wants to bring it into strong and useful service; he wants to make it fulfil its part in the world, because he knows it has a part which God has given it to fulfil; and knowing, he works, and works hard, because he is not afraid of wearing himself out,—he knows that hard work never kills; it is only worry that hastens dissolution. He does not suffer his mind for one instant to disregard the body’s calls, nor does he feel, as he kneels before his King night and morning, that it is only his soul which God cares for. He prays for strength, he prays for peaceful

Sound
mind.

sleep, he prays for health, and he rises from his knees with a new consciousness of the power of the great Physician.

Sin, enemy
to body.

Sin becomes peculiarly horrible when we recognize this holiness of the body, particularly those sins which touch the life and health of the physical system. Intemperance, impurity and a host of other evils are enemies which the true Christian fights because they are sure to weaken the temple of God if they are indulged. Sin becomes just as much a positive enemy as if he saw it visibly running at him and trying to kill him. Therefore he hates it; therefore he guards against its attacks, not merely defensively but offensively. He goes out to try and weaken the power of sin in the world. He holds up its deadly character before men so that they may see it. He fights against the business of bad men which tends to destroy rather than to help humanity. He knows that anything which makes the body less capable of doing its work is wrong. This ought to simplify one's idea of sin. Anything which hurts me or makes me less capable of doing my work, or which in any way weakens or makes false any part of my physical system, must be wrong. How can one bear

foolishly to adorn himself? How can one think of changing the natural features which God has given? How can he add to that which God has made so simply beautiful, when once he grasps the idea of the body's holiness? Foolish dress, and foolish eating and drinking, and foolish habits become not merely indiscretions but farces; they become absolute shames because they cast dishonor upon that which God has made in His image. O, for a realization of this so that our lives might be healthy and the face might be bright and the eyes clear! O, for that true adornment of a meek and quiet spirit rather than that foolish and wicked imitation of a false ideal which is both ridiculous and hideous!

And now one word more in closing. Should a man love his body, it is asked? And the answer is most decidedly, yes. I recognize my body's weaknesses. I know how prone it is to sin. I know how imperfect it is because of the long struggles of humanity and because of my own imperfections in living. But oh, this body goes with me all through my earthly struggle; it has its wounds and its scars as the result of my contest; its eyes and ears have seen and heard those things which have

Love the
body.

entered into my experience; its mouth and hands and feet have had much to do with the building of my character; it is a part of me, and how can I help loving it? It is not a foolish love which tends to weaken through adulation. It is not a love which makes me forget duty or courage; but it is a love which makes me know, even as the truth has been revealed to me, that when I awake after His likeness I shall be satisfied. This old body of mine glorified by the grace of God will live forever! My friends will know it, even as I shall know them and their bodies. My heavenly life, as I sing the song of Moses as well as the song of the Lamb, will tell the story of the old battles in which my body had a part. And even as, when we come to that land, our eyes will instinctively look for the wounds in the body of the blessed Redeemer, so the little wounds and scars which have come to our bodies in our earthly contest for the King will, in the Master's eyes, prove our fidelity, and receive His loving gaze.

Dear Lord, I thank Thee for the glory which Thou hast given me in making me in Thine own image. I thank Thee, O

Christ, that Thou didst take upon Thyself when Thou camest to earth a body like unto mine own, and that Thou hast exalted it, glorified, into Thine own Kingdom. Let me, I pray Thee, realize the sacredness of my body. Let me never forget that it is the temple of the Holy Ghost. Let me never forget that it is to rise again. Help me to use it reverently, and to keep it for Thee; and at last, O Saviour, redeem it and bring it to that home where its weaknesses shall be removed and it shall be glorified forever. Amen.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE MIND.

No wise men have ever been able to draw a distinct line between the parts of man's being, nor has any wisdom yet explained the way in which the mind works. We commonly speak of it as existing in the brain, and so the head of man is counted as the highest part of him, not only because of its location but because of its character. But we do know that the mind of man differentiates him from the brute. If there is any kind of thought amongst animals it is what we call instinct rather than reason. Man alone can reason, and thought with him is an endowment from the Infinite One, Who not only breathed into man at his creation the breath of life, but made him a living soul.

Our
minds for
God.

How can we glorify God with our minds? Some people, although not very many in these days, imagine that the mind is constantly warring against the spirit,

that reason is contrary to faith, and that the things which the mind deals with are so far removed from the common life in many particulars that they are useless. It is when we remember that God wishes us to love Him with our minds that we realize the sacredness of thought. Thought begins when we are very little, and when developed aright becomes a wonderful part of our human experience. It may, indeed, lead us astray; it may, indeed, put itself in hostility against those things which God has revealed and yet which we cannot comprehend; it may exalt itself and declare that it will accept nothing save that which it can understand; but in spite of these faults the mind stands as the medium through which God speaks to us, and by which we are to do His will and fulfil the purpose for which He created us.

We must not, though it is a temptation, consider the mind in any philosophical fashion just now. This has been done and well done in many books. What we want to do is to see very simply how the Christian man is to use his mind as God wants him to use it. And the very first rule which must assert itself is that the mind is to hold itself in harmony with the

Mind in
har-
mony.

other parts of the being. As soon as it exalts itself, and thinks itself superior to the body or the spirit, then it fails to fulfil its purpose. As soon as it wanders away into realms which are not intended for it, then again it fails of its purpose. As soon as it lauds itself over the body or the soul and claims not only superiority but supreme rule, then again the mind is usurping a place which does not belong to it. We are to think in order that we may do. We are to use our minds in order to understand all of the infinite truth which God reveals to us as fast as we are capable of receiving it; but we are always to make our minds work in harmony with that daily living and that love for God which cannot be, and must not be, disregarded.

Cultiva-
tion
of mind.

Again, we are to remember that the mind, as well as the body and soul, is to be cultivated. It is the duty of every Christian to study, and he must bear in mind that this study should always be for a certain purpose, namely, to make his whole life more useful. Here we touch the great question of education, and it is a most important question. There are many ways in which education is employed amongst men. There are many lines upon which

it moves. But the simple truth we should remember is, that those things which most help a man to live usefully are the things which the mind ought to be called upon to grasp. It is all very well as a recreation for a man to study curious things, but if he is going to do his work as it ought to be done he wants to have well laid the foundation principles so that he may erect a good superstructure. The A B C of education, —reading, spelling, writing and arithmetic, are as much a Christian duty as praying and resisting temptation. Of course there are cases where these elements of education cannot be early or easily acquired, but as soon as the Christian man knows the meaning of his life he is bound to cultivate his mind in such a way that it may make him the true and useful servant of God in the world.

There are enemies warring against the mind which are a part of it and hard to control. The thoughts prominently occupy, or may occupy, this position. It is very difficult to control our thoughts. The Psalmist prays again and again,—“Examine my thoughts.”* When the hand came and wrote upon the wall Belshazzar,

**Mental
conflicts.**

* Ps. 139: 23—Psalter version.

we are told, was troubled by his thoughts. In a moment my mind may fly all over the world; it may sink into dark places where all is vile, or it may leap to heaven and grasp the glory of God. It is wonderful and startling how easily the thoughts can move and what an effect upon the life they may have. The Christian, then, tries to control his thoughts. If he finds them going astray he brings them back. If he finds them leading him into paths which are dark, or into the puzzling ways of doubt, or holding him in foolish places when he ought to be pursuing useful occupations, he must call them in and make them obey him. Education and the thoughts of man are closely allied, for an important part of early education is the teaching of mastery in connection with thinking. The mind can readily be disciplined, and habit can control it if only the right habit is enforced. Wild thinking as well as wild speaking can work untold damage in the world. Many a man who in mature years finds his thoughts going into unworthy channels realizes how his early education was neglected, and many a man whose thoughts lead him into the mazes of doubt learns too late that his early

education has not taught him so to govern his thoughts that he should be led into permanent ways and into strong faith.

In speaking of the mind we must remember that reading has a very large influence upon thoughts as well as upon action. We are living in days when literature is very abundant. The daily paper, the weekly or monthly magazine, and the innumerable books issued from the press form an embarrassment of riches which it is not easy for a man to control. We ought to have a censorship which should warn us, at least, of things evil, even if it could not always bring us to things positively good. The way in which the minds of young people are poisoned by bad books, and the way bad plays are put upon the stage is something to make one pause. The Christian sometimes, in spite of himself, is led, through reading, to deny his high calling. He can only pray to God to keep him, and then do his best to avoid those things which can hurt. But it must be remembered that our temptation lies very strongly to-day in the direction of harmful reading; and it is not only novels or stories to which we refer, but books which tend to undermine the faith.

Discriminate
reading.

I have known good Christian people, led away by false advice, to read books written by enemies, and striking directly at the Christian faith, and yet at the same time to know little about the splendid books written for the building up of the faith. The natural curiosity of an intelligent man or woman may sometimes lead to a desire to read books which have excited some interest, and sometimes ignorance leads people far astray. I remember once meeting a young college woman who was to teach a Bible class; she asked me to recommend to her some book which would help her, and with a wonderfully naïve expression she said: "I have been reading Renan and Strauss thinking they would help me." Poor child, how could she think that she could be fitted to teach the truth of Jesus Christ by reading the books of men who did not believe in Him! There are many books written to-day in connection with religion, bearing upon the higher criticism and upon the forms and dogmas of theology, which it is dangerous for the ordinary Christian to peruse. We throw out this caution here in order that there may be exercised amongst us that wisdom which shall use the experience of others, and not

hesitate to look for guidance to men who can be trusted.

But we must, in closing, say a few words about the positive use of the mind in dealing with holy things; and the first use is meditation. We want to think, as the Holy Spirit gives us power, more and more about the truths of God as found in the Bible. We want to meditate upon the Word of God, that is, to use our minds so that we may draw from that Word the riches which God has hidden, and hidden not because He does not want us to find them or because He wants to puzzle us, but because He knows that it is through seeking that our appreciation of good things must come. Meditation is an important part of the Christian life.

On meditation.

Again, there must be that keen thinking in connection with duty which shall enable us to know what things we ought to do. If the mind is used as God bids us use it, the Christian will soon be able to distinguish between things good and evil, and to see with clearness the way in which God would have him walk. It is dallying with duty and failing to obey that bring confusion to us even as they brought confusion to Balaam in the Old Testament

On duty.

story. Some persons think more quickly than others and decide more quickly; but every Christian if he trains his mind aright can think in such a way as to bring his life into the path which God wishes him to pursue.

Sensible
think-
ing.

And finally there must be that consecutive and steady thought which shall keep the Christian from day-dreaming. There is a great deal of thinking which is not only useless but harmful because we let the mind wander in all sorts of directions and do not keep it in a steady channel. There are times, of course, when the mind needs relaxation, and then we can let it go provided it does not wander in dark places; but in the regular life we want to think steadily and firmly and keep our minds upon that way which leads to goodness and usefulness and God. In other words the man should bring himself back unceasingly to this normal position: "What does God want me to do, and what is right in the sight of God?" He can do this even when reading things which seem to have no special connection with the religious life. He can do it while walking or sitting or even talking. There must always be that holding of the mind within the

confines of the path which leads to God, so that, however it may be occupied, this one strong current shall never be neglected.

Oh, may God help us in these days of great mental activity when men are learning with great rapidity, and all sorts of things are taught by men who are wise and by some men who are otherwise—may God help us to keep our minds fixed upon Him Who is the source of all wisdom! May He help us to use them so that we may think those things which are good and by His merciful guidance may be enabled to perform the same.

O, Thou God of wisdom, Who hast given to Thy servant a mind that he may think, and meditate upon Thy truth, and learn those things which Thou hast prepared for him to study, help me, I beseech of Thee, to bring my mind into subjection to Thy will. Let me use it always in order that I may be better fitted to do what Thou wouldst have me do. Guard me against false and unworthy thoughts, against day-dreaming, and against wandering into paths of darkness. Help me to see clearly and to think honestly and to study unceasingly, so that at last when

the brightness of Thy glorious wisdom bursts upon me I may be found by Thy grace ready to enter into the wonderful paths of eternal truth, and to understand the mystery which Thou wilt then reveal. For Christ's sake. Amen.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE SOUL.

“God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” So did Christ speak, and He gave us in these words the interpretation of what we commonly call the soul. It is a little perplexing to give a clear definition of the word in Greek which is sometimes translated soul, sometimes spirit and sometimes life. It is an interesting study to take the word as used in the New Testament and note its varied significance. But for us in this practical study of the life of a Christian man it is sufficient to take the common acceptation of the term soul.

When we sing:

“ Jesus, Lover of my soul
Let me to Thy bosom fly,”

or when we pray in our childhood’s evening prayer:

“ I pray Thee, Lord,
My soul to keep,”

Loving
God.

we refer to that spiritual part of our nature with which we love God and pray to Him and worship Him. Of course, as we have already shown, we are to worship God and love Him with our minds and our bodies also, but the soul is that which seems to come nearest to God and to guide the mind and the body into a close communion with Him. It is that in us which aspires towards God and towards holy things. It is that which realizes and longs for the things of God. It is that to which Jesus speaks and through which the Holy Spirit guides. It will not do to say that the soul is that which lives forever, for the body and the mind will live forever also, and yet from the Bible we are led to believe that the soul after death enters into a place called Paradise while the body sleeps awaiting the general resurrection day. When our Lord said on the Cross: "Into thy hands I commend my spirit," He taught that the soul or spirit enters into Paradise there to rest and work and serve until the time shall come when the whole being—body, mind and soul—shall enter into glory. When speaking, therefore, of the immortality of the soul we are to remember that it is really the part of us which

Soul im-
mortal.

is nearest to God and the part which holds the supremacy in our nature, for it is the soul which should govern and control the mind and the body, not in any slavish fashion as if they were inferior, but in a noble fashion as keeping the full harmony of our humanity. When a chord of three notes is struck upon the piano the three form one, and yet the key-note is that which, as we listen, is most prominent. So it is with our being; the three parts are in harmony and yet there is one which leads.

If we can think, then, of the soul as being the power by which we come nearest to God and with which we commune with Him, it will be easy for us to recognize our duty towards God in connection with our spirits. The first thing we note is that our souls should always dwell in the presence of God. From Him we are to draw our light. From Him we are to gain our knowledge of right. From Him we are to learn the things which are holy and pure. And constantly, therefore, with our souls we must aspire, that is, we must long for holy things—for the things which God has prepared in another world, and for the pure things which He has bidden us seek

In God's
presence.

to establish in this world. The man who has no high aspirations is the man who is practically dead. When one is satisfied with things as they are, and with himself, then he loses the delight and inspiration which come from catching a vision of a holier world and a holier self, and sinks down inevitably into a low condition. When a man longs for God, and cries out as did the patriarch Job: "Oh that I knew where I might find him!" and cries with Moses: "Show me thy glory," then he is growing in all those graces of body, of mind and of soul which shall make him more and more what God would have him be, and fill him with enthusiasm to lift up the world. This aspiration of the human heart is born of the life which God has given us. Man alone has a soul. It is the divine in him, still in embryo, but a germ with possibilities of wonderful development and growth. It is the desire of the soul for God that makes a man love the things that are pure and good and holy. It is the soul that makes him restless in the midst of imperfection, and capable of telling the difference between things excellent and things wrong. It is the soul that catches the vision of the

Aspirations.

Almighty, and it catches the vision because it sees, through the power which God gives, the glory which shall at last be attained and enjoyed in Heaven. We must therefore cultivate these aspirations, these longings, even although at times they may make us sad because of our inability immediately to reach them. Emerson says: "A man is known by his aspirations," and that saying is true, truer than even Emerson realized. The man who aspires for earthly honor or glory or knowledge is, of course, a little higher than the sluggard who cares for none of these things but only wants to sleep and eat. But the man who aspires for holiness, goodness and God, who is dissatisfied with himself and with the world and in his dissatisfaction tries to make both better, he is known indeed by these very lofty and glorious sighings of his spirit for the things which God has placed before His children.

Again, with the soul we are to commune with God. When Christ prayed that we might abide in Him even as He abides in us, He referred particularly to the spirit of man which can take to itself the very nature of Christ and can itself enter into His divine nature. It is not easy to ex-

Com-
munion.
with
God.

press this great truth, but through experience it comes so mightily that one can never doubt the fact. As we read the Psalms of David we are impressed by the way in which his soul communed with God. As we study the life of St. John the Evangelist, and read his words urging to love, we know that his soul communed with his Maker. So all of the real Christians in the history of the world, whether they were great writers and fathers of the church, or whether they were the humble people whose names are not known on earth but are written in the Lamb's Book of Life, had this spiritual communion with God. Tennyson urges to this in those beautiful lines:

“ Speak to Him, thou, for He hears,
And Spirit with Spirit can meet—
Closer is He than breathing,
And nearer than hands and feet.”

It is through this communion of the soul with God, and through it alone, that we find peace. The body may be in the midst of great tumult, and tossed in pain hither and thither with agonizing suffering; the mind may be confused, and unable to see clearly or to comprehend; but the soul, drawing near to God, finds in Him the

peace which passeth understanding, and then comes with that glorious calmness to make the body strong and the mind quiet. The Christian, therefore, must learn and practise the joy of this spiritual communion with God, without which he cannot live, without which he cannot grow, without which he cannot endure.

Let us remember again that it is the soul which really brings us near to our fellows, even as it brings us near to God. I cannot really help my brother unless, in a measure, at least, I understand him, and this understanding is not mental or physical, but spiritual. It has indeed an element of the physical in it, for I think we are learning to-day that there is a peculiar strength in physical association and nearness which is something more than mere animal propinquity, and we are learning also that mind can read and perhaps influence mind in such a way as to help or hinder; but in spite of this the soul holds the ascendancy in our relationship with others. I commune with my friend in spirit, that is, I realize how he feels, and I feel with him. I see things more and more from his point of view. I enter into the deep emotions of his nature. I am

Soul fellowship.

one with him in his longings, and so I am privileged to help him, even as he in like manner helps me. In dealing with men at large who do not perhaps come into such close spiritual touch with me as my friend, the same rule still applies. I cannot help a man unless I enter into his emotions. I cannot help the drunkard unless I realize something of the despair or passion or weakness which may lead him to seek to drown his troubles in drink. I cannot help the fallen woman unless, in a high and pure way, and yet very absolutely, I grasp her trouble, and the way in which temptation comes to her. There is something very beautiful in this thought of the soul communing with the souls of others, because it has already communed with God. It seems like bringing the divine very close to the human in our earthly struggle, and it assures us that we are bound to do good simply because God's Spirit is working through our spirit. St. Paul expresses this in many ways, and beautifully, as, for instance, when he speaks of the Spirit of God making intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered; and when he speaks of the fruits of the Spirit, and when he urges our living in the Spirit.

It is the whole secret of usefulness in the world. It is the whole secret of true love. It is the whole secret of that blessed human relationship which makes a man feel as the divine Christ felt, when, in order to save men, He took upon Himself the shape of humanity.

Finally, the Christian man must remember that his soul above all else is to be kept clean. Sin stains the soul before it touches the mind or the body. The consciousness of having done wrong comes to our spirits even when the body is yet untouched and the mind is yet unconvinced. It is wonderful how what we call conscience speaks to us, both in warning and in reproof, when there is temptation or when we have yielded to sin. It is like a sensitive plant which feels the touch. It is like the ear which catches the sound before the brain can interpret the sound. It is like the music of the spheres of which the ancients wrote, which gives harmony always, and yet of which we are scarce conscious. To keep the soul sensitive so that it may feel the touch of God's hand and revolt against the touch of evil; to keep the soul pure so that, washed in the blood of Christ, it may be ready to bring

Soul
stains.

the body and the mind also for sanctification to Him Who alone can heal; to keep the soul so near to God that His light shall be reflected by it even as the moon reflects the light of the sun,—this is that which will make the Christian a true follower of the Master in all holiness and joy.

God's voice
to the
soul.

If it is thought that these words about the soul are a little perplexing and incomprehensible, let us strive to bring the truth right down to our daily living, and so find help for ourselves. Let me think of the way in which God speaks to me through everything which comes to me—my experiences, my joys and sorrows, the beauties of nature, and the things I hear and read. They speak to my soul, and my soul is to take them and gather from them the good which God sends and reject the evil which Satan may have sought to mingle with them. Day by day I am to let my soul rise up towards God. Day by day I am to worship Him with the spirit. Day by day I am to help my brothers through this power of divine sympathy which works first in my soul and then goes out with intelligence and physical strength to render aid. May God grant us such an unceasing in-flooding of His Holy Spirit that we

may worship Him with all our souls and so become more and more like the Master!

Dear Lord, Who hast made me a living soul and hast breathed into me Thine own divine breath, help me, I beseech of Thee, to worship Thee in spirit and in truth. Suffer me to draw near to Thee in my soul. Join Thyself to me, even as I am by Thy grace joined to Thee, that so I may will only those things which Thou dost will and may find peace in communion with Thee. Let me in my daily life serve my fellow men through that divine power which Thou hast implanted within me, feeling their infirmities, and recognizing their needs, and longing to bless them. And above all, dear Lord, in order that I may have these gifts for which I have prayed, wash my soul and keep it clean. Let it not be stained by anything which is unpleasing to Thee, and may it ever be so pure that it may see Thee. For Thine own dear sake. Amen.

CHAPTER XX.

TEMPTATIONS.

WE come now to the battle of life, and that battle is marked by just as real a conflict and by just as many trials as is the battle of the body in the midst of foes. No one can read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation without seeing how this earthly life is ever noted as a contest. Even the Master Himself is represented in the Book of Revelation as going forth conquering and to conquer. St. Paul bids us "Put on the whole armor of God." The Church of God is put in the world to establish Christ's Kingdom. She has her battle-field; and the individual has within himself a battle-field where temptations come as really and as mightily as they came to Jesus Christ in the wilderness when He was tempted of the devil.

Tempta-
tions
from
without.

Temptation comes to us from without when we are urged by others or by the circumstances of life to do wrong. They

come directly from the devil when he puts in our hearts evil thoughts and paints pleasures which do not exist in order that we may be deceived and yield. Temptation comes from our own hearts sometimes, so that we can hardly tell the difference between our good selves and our bad selves. The story of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde is wonderfully true to life. The ancients used to believe that every man had within himself really two men—one good and the other bad. St. Paul himself says: “When I would do good, evil is present with me.” It is this internal conflict which is the most trying of all. We can, in a measure, understand the temptation which another man places in our way, and steel ourselves to resist it. We can understand the direct temptations of Satan even though he sometimes may come as an angel of light, and cry with the Master, “Get thee behind me.” But when we are tempted from within, when our own selves seek to lead us astray, then indeed we are perplexed. But in all these temptations the same general rules will apply.

From within.

Before speaking of these rules let us note two or three truths for our comfort. And first, we must remember that we are

All are tempted.

all tempted, that no man has ever lived who was not subject to trials, and that the Master Himself endured temptation. Sometimes when one is sorely vexed by temptings to do wrong, and wonders whether he is not utterly corrupt, it is well for him to remember that all flesh from 'Adam's day has had this old conflict, and that it is a part of the world's experience, and so must have something to do with the world's progress.

God
knows.

Secondly, let us remember that these temptations, or at least our consciousness of them, proves to us, not that we are cast away but that we are really God's children whom Satan is trying to steal from the Father. I love that verse of the old hymn:

“ Did I meet no trials here,
No temptations by the way,
Might I not with reason fear
I should be a cast-away?”

If Satan did not think there was danger of his losing us he would not bother to tempt us. When a man loses consciousness of temptation or trial, that is, when he does not know that he is being tempted and does not care, he has, indeed, fallen into a condition of sleep which is sad and

hopeless unless some great power shall awaken him.

And third, let us always remember that these temptations and trials should, if we deal with them rightly, make us better. The man who comes unscathed through the battle is hardly the hero whom we revere; but he who comes out of the battle dusty and worn and perchance wounded, nay, he who has fallen in the battle and died struggling, he is the hero whom men delight to honor and whom God loves. So the conflict is not a hopeless one, nor is it, although endless, a battle without final victory. The victory may not be marked here. We may, indeed, die in the very midst of the battle with the guns thundering and the swords flashing, and our last sight be one of carnage and misery. But if we preserve our courage and never yield, we may be sure that the temptations have made us what God would have us be through His grace, and have proved that we are truly soldiers of the King.

And now how shall we deal with these temptations? First, surely, by going to meet them rather than waiting for them to catch us. It has always seemed to me a wonderful thing that our Lord after His

**Making
good.**

**Meeting
tempta-
tions.**

baptism was "led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil." He began His ministry with a conflict which He Himself sought. And we, His children, are not merely to stand on the defensive, but we are to go out where the battle with wrong is raging and take a part in it. If the man who is tempted to drink would begin a conflict against intemperance and try to save others who are being carried away, and cultivate by his zeal a hatred of the saloon, and of the drink which seeks to make him captive, he would find himself far stronger to overcome. If the man who feels within himself the temptation to laziness, or doubt, or selfishness, would at once attack these foes, going into the very thickest of the battle, he would find himself victorious. Of course a man is not justified in throwing himself wantonly into the way of temptation; he wants to go out to meet temptation with the idea of battling with it. He wants to fight his enemy because it is the enemy of his brothers. No man can really fight his battle alone if he wishes to be successful.

Again, we must remember how our Lord quoted Scripture in resisting Satan.

We cannot do better than follow His example. When temptations assail me, if I will remember how God has spoken and how God has blessed me and how He has bidden me work for Him, and bring from the Bible words proving all these things and hurl them at Satan, then I am sure to conquer. It is wonderful how the Bible has texts for every single temptation. The Christian should arm himself with the Word of God even as the warrior arms himself with his sword, for St. Paul calls the Word of God the "sword of the Spirit."

Quoting
Scripture.

Again, in meeting these temptations we must never be discouraged. No matter how severely cast down we may seem to be or how sorely wounded, no matter how low we may feel ourselves to have fallen even in our own eyes, and much more then in God's sight, we must never for one moment believe that the struggle is useless. The true victor is the man who will not give up. He may fall again and again, but if he rises up and renews the conflict he is proving himself to be the hero whom God loves. It is not the man who never falls, or thinks he never falls and boasts of it, and so esteems himself as better than

Undis-
mayed.

others, and whom our Lord so tremendously rebukes when he says: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" but it is the man who, like Peter, weeps bitterly for his error and then goes on fighting; it is the man who, like David, though falling again and again will not let go of God and of hope; it is the man who, realizing his own weakness and fighting with all his might, and yet sometimes swept off his feet, prays to God and will not yield—it is such an one who is really victorious and at last will be crowned.

Future
glory.

And finally we want to remember that all of these temptations have something to do with our future glory. We cannot tell what they mean. We do not know how they are to work good for us when we battle with them, but we do know that since God permits them to come to us they must have a divine purpose which, if we are true and loyal and steadfast, will at last be revealed. And this is the most inspiring fact of all. Everything in my life, as we have already seen, has a meaning; not one single experience or sorrow or joy or struggle is without significance. To realize this, and so to go bravely onward, never giving up, never despairing,

broken-hearted it may be, and yet never losing sight of the glory to come, is to live as God would have us live.

Let me say one word more. 'A glorious time is coming when the temptation days will be over. St. John gives us an account of the day when Satan shall be bound and cast into the bottomless pit, and when, as a result, sorrow and sighing shall flee away. The Christian helps bring that day nearer by the earnestness of his conflict. He looks forward to it as a supreme event connected with his entrance into heaven. He knows it as a fact which cannot be disputed. He can stand before Satan or before the temptations which come to him, and cry out: "You may try me, you may attack me, you may seem to get the better of me, but I will never for one instant yield to you or count you victorious, for the time is coming when you will be cast down and destroyed, and when I, by the grace of my Saviour, shall be redeemed and live forever!" This splendid cry of enthusiastic faith should never leave the Christian's lips; his heart must be buoyed up by it; his weary nerves find through it their recuperation; his grief and remorse be buried in it, and his song of thanks-

Helps in
conflicts.

giving rise up from it, because it is the great promise of the Gospel, and, next to seeing the face of the Master in heaven, it will be the great joy of eternity.

O, Thou Who in the wilderness didst meet and vanquish the Prince of evil, come Thou to me as I am tried, and give me Thy grace that I may resist and conquer! Help me, dear Christ, to know that these temptations are the lot of humanity and that I, even as all Thy children, must fight if I would reign. Save me from discouragement and despair. Let me not think that though wounded I am helpless. Teach me how to cry to Thee and to rely upon Thee in the hour of need. Help me more and more to gain the victory. Support me with Thine ever present strength, and O, dear Lord, may my struggle itself hasten the day when all evil shall be destroyed, when the battle shall be over, the victory eternally won, and I shall see Thy face, and hear Thy voice saying "Well done." Amen.

CHAPTER XXI.

HOPE.

ONE of the greatest elements in the Christian life and one which St. Paul places side by side with faith and love, is hope. We need it when we are in the midst of temptation, and so it is well to consider its real meaning here, for the Christian cannot really serve God and live his life as he ought unless he has this divine grace. What then is hope? We ordinarily think of it as something very intangible, a possibility of something happening at some time and in some way and in some place—a curious and uncertain emotion of the soul that there must be an escape from the things which distress us. But surely hope is more definite than that! It is a real thing. It is a positive and sure glory, even as faith is a substance and love a power. Hope is that by which we catch sight of a vision and bring it down to the present and live by it. Hope is the power

What is
hope?

by which the sculptor stands before his marble and notes not the chips flying from his chisel, but sees only the figure imprisoned in the stone, which he is seeking to bring out that others may see it too. Hope is the power by which the musician brings from the instrument or from his voice that which has already sung its symphony in his own soul. Hope is the power by which the artist, standing before his canvas and unmindful of his brush or paints, sees the landscape or the face, and seeks to place it upon the canvas that others also may rejoice in it. Hope is the power by which the author puts into words the truth which has already been revealed to his own mind. It is the grasping of things to be, and making them the ever-present models in the daily effort. It is the sight of great good which, burning itself into the soul, incites that soul to longings, and the soul in its turn calls upon the mind to plan, and the mind in its turn calls upon the body to act, so that hope seizes upon the whole man and exalts and makes ready for action every part of him.

Hope a
power.

It is very important for us to remember this definition, for hope is a power which God has given to enable us to endure and

to work. If I am not sure whether my work is going to result in anything or not; if I wonder whether this struggle is worth while; if I question as to the final outcome of all these years of striving and suffering and agony of soul, then there cannot possibly be either any joy in my life or any intelligence in my conflict. It is hope which inspires, for it brings the vision and holds it before me. It is hope which en-fires, so that my sleeping energies are aroused, and I go forth with new and ever greater determination. It is hope which fills me with delight, for it shows me, even while all I am doing seems imperfect and unformed, that glorious completeness which I am slowly working out. It is hope which binds us together as fellow-strugglers, making us know that that for which we in common, although with varied emotions, long for, is coming at last in a perfect world and in perfect conditions. The wonderful writings of men, like the *New Atlantis* and the *New Republic*, the poems which have thrilled the heart of humanity, the music which has lifted up the deadened senses until they tingled with a new force, the cries of men which have moved the multitudes and made them leap to their

feet with a deathless ambition—these are only expressions of hope which have seized upon men, making them see the vision, and making them strive anew for its realization.

Indeed, everything which helps us brings, as the secret of its help, this wonderful grace of hope. I try to help my friend because I see the vision of what my friend would be if he only had that which I long to give him. I can only comfort the one who is in trouble as I realize that there is peace for him if I can only get him to accept it. I can only educate the mind of the child as I place before myself and try to place before him a splendid image of truth and of knowledge and of usefulness. I can only help the world as I see the world, by the power of hope, made blessed and perfect.

Hope in
Christ.

If I despair concerning myself, that is, if I have no hope, I can do little in the way of progress. If I look at myself and say: "You poor, miserable worm of the dust, how is it possible for you ever to amount to anything?" then in my hopelessness I at once lose power. If I look at the world and cry: "Oh, you miserable world, you are not worth saving, and you never can be saved; I shake off the dust

of my feet against you!" then I am doomed to failure in any effort I may make to lift the world up. Indeed, it was the fine hopefulness of Christ, we may reverently say, which was the secret of His power in His salvation of mankind. When, for instance, He came to the man at the pool of Bethesda, who had been helpless for thirty-eight years, and who must have been an exceedingly unattractive specimen of humanity, how could our Lord with His divine perfection and His hatred of things crude and coarse and unclean, have drawn near to him, had He not seen in him that which He was to make him—a pure, strong, clean, healthy man! How could our Lord have died for the world if He had questioned whether the world was worth saving or whether it ever could be saved? Did He not look upon men with great longing? Did He not declare that being lifted up He would draw all men unto Him? Did He not, with this divine glory of hope, catch a vision, which to Him as the Son of God was more than a vision, of the time when at last all that God had created, man and the universe, should be sinless and complete?

Yea, we may even say in all reverence

that God Himself has patience with us only because He has hope, that is, because He sees us as we are going to be. Dr. Stalker in a little book called "The Four Men" says that in every man there are really four men: the man as he sees himself, the man as his best friend sees him, the man as the world at large sees him, and the man as God sees him. Now how does God see man? He looks upon him, we say, as poor and weak and human and sinful. Yes; but is that the only or the real way in which God sees man? Does He not see me, poor and unworthy though I am, as He longs to make me, and as He knows by His grace I will become—a man perfect and strong and true? The father looks upon his son, and sees him not as he is, incapable, unformed, without strength of character, but as he is going to be when he has been educated and has gained strength through development, and has become a man. So God looks upon the world and is patient with it and loves it, because He knows what the old world is going to be by and by.

Hope
helps.

Practically, how does this hope come to the Christian man and help him? First, it gives him a vision which is to be the

model of his life ; he is to catch sight of that vision of himself as God wants him to be, and as God will make him, and try his best to fashion his life after it. Second, it makes him patient with himself though he is very weak and though he does not seem to reach the heights. As his hope speaks to him he knows that the vision is not a mockery, and that at last he shall attain. And so he struggles on cheerfully, faithfully, and with a song, knowing that for him, as God's child, there is no such word as failure. And lastly, this wonderful hope comes as a power to stimulate. When a man climbing the mountain-side catches sight of the top of the mountain bathed in sunlight and calling him enticingly to rest and to a glorious view, he feels new vigor in his wearied limbs, his feet though they slip will not give up any more, and he presses on to the summit. So it is that the Christian feels himself thrilled, not by a vague emotion or desire, and not by an uncertain possibility of success, but by the sight of himself as successful and as victorious, which he sees and which he knows is genuine and true. The Christian is made courageous, not by dreams—that is, by intangible suggestions which mock through

their unreality,—but by visions which hold before him, while waking as well as while sleeping, the good which is to be, the joy of victory, and of friendship, and of love, and of seeing the dear Christ, visions in which his Christian life is to end and by which his toil is at last to be crowned.

O, my King, I thank Thee for hope! Thou hast given me a vision of myself by which I may fashion my life. Thou hast given me a vision of the world made perfect so that I may know what to do for the world's good and may not lose heart because the end is so slow in coming. Yea, Thou dost open Heaven to me, and cause me to hear already the songs and to see already the mansions, and to feel already the thrills of delight, so that I may go on my way as one who seeks a certain country. Dear Lord, let me never deny Thee by any poor doubts. Let me never turn from Thee, and think that the struggle of my life is vain and the end vague. But oh, keep me full of that divine enthusiasm which is born of the vision which Thou dost give, and which shall make my weary feet like the springing feet of the hart, and which shall set me up on high. For Thine own dear sake. Amen.

CHAPTER XXII.

IMMORTALITY.

THE Christian instinctively asks, in the midst of his struggles, and while holding firmly to the faith once for all delivered:—"What shall come to me after this life is over?" It is a question which the human naturally asks, and which God answers for us. We must never think that God hides anything from us. He does not always reveal the fulness of His truth, because we are not able to bear it, but He gives us enough light to show us our way and to make us sure concerning that which is to be. We need not stop now to go into the interesting study of the way in which men of all ages and of all forms of religion have tried to penetrate the mystery of the life after death. They all elaborated theories, but they had no revelation. Only to the children of Israel was a partial revelation given, and that was so vague that even amongst the best of the Jews there

was doubt, and, amongst many, absolute unbelief. Job seems to have had a vision when he cried: "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." David also threw his great cry out: "I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord." But there was no positive declaration from God concerning our future life until Jesus Christ came.

Eternal
life.

Now, what did Jesus teach about immortality? First, He declared very positively that there was a place to which He was going when He ascended, and where He was to prepare a home for His followers. He did not describe this place nor tell where it was, but His words are so strong that we can have no doubt as to the certainty of two or three facts: first, that we shall be with Him; second, that we shall be free from sorrow and sin; and third, that we shall live forever.

Again, Jesus taught that this eternal life is the real life and that our life on earth is but a preparation for it. Indeed, it becomes so real, through His teaching, to the Christian, that virtually it seems al-

most to begin here, for Christ said: "He that believeth on me hath everlasting life." That is, the life of struggle and service here is so inspired by the certainty of the life hereafter that everlasting power seems to enter into the Christian as he battles and prays.

Once more, Jesus implies that we are to be together and know one another in that world, even as we are together and know one another here. He said to His disciples: "Ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel;" and again those wonderful words: "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." And yet again those dear words: "Rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven." These are only suggestions of the many words which our Lord spoke, proving that His children are to know each other even as they are to know Him in the life beyond.

And then by His resurrection and the taking of His glorified human body up into heaven, Jesus taught us that we are to live forever with our bodies glorified. All that He passed through on earth was but

an example of what we are called upon to pass through. He lived the perfect human life; He died; He arose from the dead, and He ascended into heaven. Even as He was born—save that His birth was miraculous—so we are born; even as He grew, so we grow; even as He struggled, so we struggle; even as He died, so we must die; and even as, after His resurrection, He ascended into heaven, so also shall we.

Living
with
Christ.

We must also remember that immediately after death, according to the experience of Christ, our souls shall live with Him. When our Lord died upon the Cross He said to the penitent by His side: "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise," and in this place or state called "Paradise" during the three days before His resurrection, he lived, and, according to St. Peter, preached. Without any long argument we can clearly state what has been believed in the church from the first: that when we die our souls shall go where the soul of Jesus went and shall be with Him, and that we too shall have an occupation which He will give us, associated with His own. The life of the soul after death will be work without weariness, and joy and peace untold.

When we come to the Epistles we find, particularly by St. Paul, this same wonderful truth of immortality declared. Nothing can equal in all literature, outside of the words of our Lord, that wonderful fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians. It not only teaches the resurrection of the body, but it teaches that body, mind and soul shall finally, after the last great day, dwell forever in bliss with Him the Redeemer and King. The Christian ought to read the Epistles through, in order to gather together the wonderful declarations which our Lord's followers gave, they being inspired by the Holy Ghost, and therefore speaking the truth concerning the after-life.

And when we come to the revelation of St. John, we find so much that is gloriously comforting in the vision which was vouchsafed to him of the future, that our hearts and tears overflow in gratitude, and we feel assured of the joy which is awaiting us.

The simple faith of the Christian, then, is this,—that if he holds his confidence steadfast unto the end and believes in Christ and loves Him and tries to serve Him, when he dies his body will rest in

the grave and his soul will go to a place which Christ called Paradise where it shall rest and work and serve and grow until the great day of resurrection when all of God's children shall rise together; then with body, mind and soul re-united and made glorious because redeemed by Christ, he will go to his final abode called heaven, where with his fellows and with his King he will enjoy the dear vision of the Almighty, and with unlimited powers and ever-increasing delights, live forevermore.

Preparing
for
future
life.

Now what, practically, has this to do with the daily life of the Christian? Very much indeed, for first of all it enables him to know that his struggle and his labor are not in vain. He is preparing here for another life, and as he fits himself, or suffers himself to be fitted by God, for the glory which is to come, he will find his burdens less oppressive, and will feel already the strength which comes from an assurance concerning the future. Again, he will realize that he himself is bringing that day nearer by his efforts. He is in the world to establish, under Christ's direction, the Kingdom of God, and if he labors faithfully and believingly, and tries to per-

suade men, and holds fast through all to the King, he will hasten the coming of that great day. And again he will feel more and more entering into him, even now, the blessedness of the good things which are to be. In his love for his friends, for instance, he will know that that love is to continue forever, and that death cannot destroy it. In his pains and griefs because of the severity of the battle he will look beyond and be comforted by the thought of the peace which at last shall come, and the victory which shall result from his efforts. He will be, not like one who beateth the air, but as one who sees the end and at once struggles both to attain it and to help others attain it. Even nature herself will become more beautiful to the Christian because he believes that the whole creation now groaning shall at last be delivered and made a perfect part of the eternity of God.

Our worship not only teaches concerning the eternal life, and thence gains its significance, but it also draws us wonderfully near, while we live, to the blessedness of that day. Our hymns and our prayers, the messages from the pulpit and the messages from God to our souls all imply—indeed,

Life in
worship.

they are based upon the fact—that we are to live forever after this life is over and after the great day of judgment, in happiness and peace. Worship would be a very vague and indefinite thing and our own private prayers would be simply the sighings of a hopeless heart were it not for the hold this great truth of immortality has upon us. How could I pray to God to forgive me and to bless me and to give me strength and wisdom in my conflict if I did not feel the influence of the far-off horizon beyond which there is glory and rest? How could I pray for my friends, loving them as I do, if I did not believe that our friendship, sanctified by the friendship of Jesus Christ, was to be eternal? How could I read God's Word if I did not draw from it, not only lessons bearing upon my daily life and work but also revelations concerning God's care for me and His plans for my infinite happiness? At the root of all our Christianity lies the certainty of immortality, even as at its centre lies the redemption of Jesus Christ.

No doubts.

More and more the Christian wants to hold fast to and accept the inspiration of this great and blessed truth. He must never suffer himself to doubt. He must

take the great words of Christ and of the Bible and comfort himself with them unceasingly. He must picture to himself the great day of perfection and what he will be and do when at last the victory is gained and the King has complete control of His Kingdom. And he must bring to others in their sorrow and in their doubt the strong force of his own faith so that they, buoyed up by his confidence, may themselves see a vision and be brought to the certainty of God's love and care.

Finally, let it be remembered that immortality is a revelation from God even as it is to be His gift. Scientists and philosophers have tried and tried in vain to prove immortality. Lectures have been given and theories have been advanced, and even scientific experiments carried on having as their object the answer to this great human question: "Shall a man die and live again?" But, like all the wonderful truths of our faith, immortality can only be known as the soul trusts and loves and serves and believes Jesus Christ. He only can say: "I know that I shall live forever, and that with all of God's people I shall enjoy everlasting felicity," who in his heart gives himself to Christ and tries to

do what He asks. So that the Christian need not be troubled when men come to him and cry: "Prove to us what you believe concerning eternal life." There are things which are beyond proof here on earth and yet we know they are true; so it is with immortality.

Dear Lord, I thank Thee that Thou hast not left me uncertain concerning what and where I shall be when I die. In thine own Book and by Thy blessed words Thou hast made clear the answer which satisfies my heart. I know not what bliss awaits me there, and I am too feeble to understand the greatness of the glory which Thy love has prepared; but oh, dear Master, I know that even as Thou hast cared for me from my creation, so Thou wilt care for me through all the ages, and in Thee have I put my trust. Amen.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE JOY OF THE CHRISTIAN.

As we draw now to the end of this simple declaration concerning the faith and life of a Christian man it may seem to some as if there was little of joy in that life and much of conflict and sorrow and suffering. Indeed, it has been too often the assertion of Christianity that in this world there can be no peace. Men have set their faces like a flint and tried to go through the battle with no idea of present inspiration or delight; and men have believed that they were in the world simply to get ready to die, and that life was a pilgrimage and an exile. The fuller and larger view of Christianity certainly dispels any such idea as that. While on earth we cannot, of course, have the fulness of joy which shall be hereafter, and while in the midst of struggle there must be pain and suffering; yet the true Christian rejoices in his life here. With confidence in God and with a

**Joy in
Christ-
life.**

clear understanding of his relationship to God he sees beauties everywhere and draws them to his heart, and sucks from them the consolation which God intends to give to His children. No one has any right to laugh save the Christian, for he alone knows what joy means. No one can really be happy but the Christian, for he alone knows the meaning of happiness. Into all of his life there come flashing great beams of light, and there come throbbing great assurances of love which fill him with a consciousness of security which nothing can destroy.

Glory of
life.

The glory of life—that is the truth which we Christians need more and more to learn. Upon what is this glory based? Let us consider for a moment.

First, we know what our life means. We know whence we came, and whither we are going, and what we have here to do, so that there is no indefiniteness in our existence; and from the very clearness of our knowledge we draw a strength which is akin to delight. The Christian man alone can say: “I know;” and in knowledge there is not only power but comfort.

Second, the Christian has an unceasing association with his Maker; he communes

with God and God speaks to him. He is not travelling a lonely road with no voice to speak and no hand to touch; he is in constant association with the Christ Who is with him all the days. Therefore he has that great joy which always comes through association with the highest and best. A man is happy when he is with his friends—with those whom he loves and can trust; how much happier must he be when he knows that he is with God even as God is with him, and that being pure-hearted, that is, sincere, he can already see God!

And third, the Christian finds in his work a delight. Delight in
work. As we said before in speaking of service, the true man who is healthy in spirit loves to work. He knows what work means, and he finds a delight in doing it because he knows what it means. Whether it be the daily toil, or the special effort to accomplish some desired end, or the carrying out of some plan, or the putting forth of some definite and useful thing for the pleasure of others, all work becomes a delight just in the doing of it. One can measure himself as well as his Christianity pretty accurately just by asking and answering the question: "Do I love to do the things which I am trying to do?"

Joy in
pain.

And then finally, there comes a joy even in sorrow, because the Christian knows that sorrow and pain have their uses and that without them he could not be made what God wishes to have him become. We will realize at last that which we cannot perfectly comprehend here, how every tear (and that is what God means when He speaks of putting our tears in His bottle), every grief, every pain has had a wonderful part in fitting us for the glory of God's home. It is a poor suggestion that suffering and pain come from the devil. Whatever sufferings do come as a result of Satan's temptings, we may be sure (and this is the lesson from the Book of Job) that God permits them, and that He permits them in order that good may finally result. He who uses grief aright finds a joy which cannot be measured in words or described even in the richest of language. I knew a man who had prayed for days that his friend might be delivered from a certain evil. At last a message came, and it told him that the evil had fallen upon his friend. With trembling lips he looked up and said: "I thank Thee, God!" He realized that God answers prayer, but answers it in the best way, and he reasoned

that if he would have thanked God for an answer which seemed to his earthly mind comforting, how much more should he thank God for that which seemed at the time hard, but which he knew would, in the providence of God, become a blessing! So it is that the Christian all through his life finds joy even in sorrow, and rejoices in tribulation.

Should the Christian, then, it is asked, enter with a free heart into the delights of life? Should he mingle with his friends in happiness and laughter, and fling himself into the harmless pleasures of the day? Should he rejoice in the thrilling strength of his body and in the pleasures of love and in the riches of thought? The answer is, most certainly, if he realizes that he is God's child and that God loves him and that he longs to do and is trying to do God's work. It is a sin for the Christian to be gloomy, for gloom denies God's word. To doubt is to question God's power; to be happy and sing while the heart relies upon God is to prove to the King Himself and to those about us that we believe the great truth of Christianity, and that that truth is so resplendent that nothing can dim its brilliancy. Of course

Delights
of life.

the Christian cannot, it goes without saying, enter into those frivolities which are harmful and which tend to degrade. He must draw a clear distinction between real pleasures and apparent pleasures. But on the other hand he must prove to the world the joy which God gives—a joy based upon such magnificent truths and upheld by such absolute assurances that nothing can take away their sustaining character and their exhilarating influence. The gloom of the Christian bears false witness to the truth of Christ. The happiness of the Christian bears witness to the love of Christ.

What
Christi-
anity is.

And here let us say one word more. We must always remember that Christianity is not merely living a life but it is a close relationship to the King of life. How can I live near to my King and not be happy? How can I hear His gracious words and not rejoice? How can I do His work which He has called me to do, and so honored me, and not be glad? It is all very well for a Christian to keep himself from sin and to work righteousness, but if he has not constantly springing up in his soul a consciousness of the nearness of his Best Friend and does not find

in that consciousness an eternal sunshine, then he is not drawing from Christ's life that which he ought, and he is not proving by his Christianity the fulness and largeness of God's great love.

Mrs. Browning's lines should be the expression of every man's feeling:

“ And I smiled to think God's goodness flowed
around our incompleteness:
Round our restlessness His rest.”

Dear Lord, help me to rejoice in Thee. No matter how cast down I may be, no matter how seemingly dark my way, no matter how I may suffer, no matter how weary I may be in the midst of my toil, help me to look up and see Thy face, and rejoice in the light of Thy countenance. Fill me with the most blessed assurance of Thy love and care. Inspire me with the highest enthusiasm to do the will of One Who loves me so. Let me rejoice just in the living, the breathing, the seeing, the speaking. Let me rejoice in my friendships which are sanctified by Thee. Let me be glad to bear Thy cross after Thee, and let me be filled with comfort as I think not only of Thy present grace but of

the glory which at last shall come when I
see Thee face to face, and with my dear
ones enter into Thine eternal home.
Amen.

CHAPTER XXIV.

CONCLUSION.

WE have tried in this little book to express simply and categorically, without going into the proofs, which would make the book too large, the great principles of the Christian life. As we turn away there are certain conclusions which come to us, and which we may well express in a closing word.

And the first is this, that after all, the only life worth living is the Christian life. Even as Christianity has made the world what it is and is destined to make it what God would have it be, so to the individual it brings a strength and a power which can be found in no other way and which can never fail. To make a man a Christian is to bring him into a newness of living which cannot be described to him, but which he will acknowledge when once he has intelligently taken his place amongst God's people. Oh, the blessedness of a Christian

**The only
life.**

life! No matter how imperfect the Christian may know himself to be, no matter how he may be encompassed by infirmities and perplexed by problems, this great, glowing, human existence upon which the light of Christ shines becomes so real and holy that nothing can dampen or darken it.

Shared
with
others.

If the Christian really feels this, and goes on in the richness of this assurance, then he will want to do all that he can to bring others into the joy which he has found. Certainly the conclusion which the true Christian comes to very readily is that he must do all he can in every way and at every opportunity to make men believe in and follow Jesus Christ. We are the witnesses of the Master, and we are sent out by Him to tell others of the good which He has brought to us. The Christian church denies its birth and refuses its natural blessedness when it is not essentially missionary. If these great truths which we have been considering amount to anything, we cannot, we dare not, keep them to ourselves.

Bond of
unity.

And then we must remember how wonderfully Christianity binds men together; how it heals wounds and covers up hostilities, and makes one long, above all else, to

establish peace. The Master is called the "Prince of Peace." The angels sang the song at His birth: "Peace, good will toward men." In Palestine was born the new word, "brotherhood." So the Christian in his friendships and in his association with men wherever he is and however he may be situated, always feels within him that love for his brothers which can never die. Men may hate him and abuse him, but he will pray for them and keep on loving them. Men may go about to kill him, even, in the wildness of their blindness, but he will, like his Master, say: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." His heart will go out to little children; his sympathies will be touched by the sicknesses and sorrows of his fellows; his hand will be stretched out to lift up the fallen. His desire to help will be so much stronger than his spirit of criticism that even where he might find fault he will feel himself overflowing with graciousness. Never must this great fact be forgotten by the Christian; in the fullness of that which has come to him, he must go out and bless men.

And then finally, let us remember that we are to keep our eyes ever upon the

Vision of
what is
to be.

vision of that which is to be. We have dwelt upon this before. Let it be our final thought. As we work and worship, as we endure and are patient, as we rejoice and are glad, we must ever lift up our eyes to that great day towards which Christianity points and of whose coming it is the evidence, when God shall say concerning each child and concerning His whole creation: "It is very good." That day is coming; the Christian can see it by faith. Already its glad music comes floating over the sea of time. Through the surging contests and through the cries of battle it sounds its clear note of assurance. In the lonely hours of the night it sings its song. In the active labors of the day it gives its strong tone. Oh, the joy of knowing that there is a great day coming when imperfect things shall be made perfect; when eyes shall be opened, and the heart's longings satisfied, and the struggle rewarded, and the King Himself shall stand forth in all His glory saying: "Come, ye blessed of my Father!"

" O sweet and blessèd country,
The home of God's elect!
O sweet and blessèd country
That eager hearts expect!

Jesus, in mercy bring us
To that dear land of rest;
Who art, with God the Father,
And Spirit, ever blest."

'O God, Who hast prepared for those who love Thee such good things as pass man's understanding, pour into our hearts such love towards Thee that we, loving Thee above all things, may attain Thy promises which exceed all that we can desire. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
(*From the P. E. Prayer Book.*)

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